CASA ZAPATA ARCHIVE

Exploring the history and evolution of Stanford's Latinx ethnic-theme dorm through archival, visual, and spatial documentation.

Saimary Velázquez Carrasquillo
December 5, 2024

INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHIVE

Drawing inspiration from the archive created by Native American Cultural Center's (NACC) at Stanford University, which traces the history of the Native community on campus over 50 years, this archive aims to be a similar resource for understanding the history of Casa Zapata, Stanford's Latinx ethnic-theme dorm. Using archival materials, I trace the dorm's development from its foundations in student activism to its current form. Stanford's Residential Education (ResEd) website offers a brief history of the dorm, stating, "Zapata was established in 1972 when Stanford was home to only a handful of Chicane and Latine students who were the first in their families to attend college," and referencing the dorm's contemporary diversity as a "home to a range of students from many different

cultures, backgrounds, intersectional identities and experiences" (ResEd n.d, para. 3). However, this description oversimplifies a complex history, framing the dorm as a deliberate institutional creation rather than an outcome of years of student activism and advocacy which culminated in the establishment of the four ethnic-theme dorms on campus: Casa Zapata (Latinx), Ujamaa House (Black Diasporic), Okada House (Asian/Asian American), and Muwekma-Tah-Ruk (Native American/Indigenous). A central goal of this archive is to provide a deeper understanding of Casa Zapata over the years, exploring how both the dorm and its community have evolved over time.

Introduction to the Author

Before diving into the rest of the introduction, I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself, my connection to this project, and how my perspectives will impact the way this archive is written, and thus the way it will be perceived.

My name is Saimary Velázquez Carrasquillo (any/all pronouns), I am a queer Puerto Rican and a Stanford undergraduate (class of 2025), double majoring in Anthropology and Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity (CSRE). I have lived in Casa Zapata for three out of my four undergraduate years—as a freshman, junior, and now as a senior. Two of these years I served as a student leader in the dorm: first as a Resident Assistant (RA) my junior year and as an Ethnic-Theme Associate (ETA) in my senior year.

While outlining this archive, I quickly realized that I cannot separate my own perspectives and opinions from it. My experiences underscore every line I write. I invite viewers to engage in this archive with that in mind, to delve into these conversations with me as your full selves with your own thoughts and opinions. My hope is for this archive to become a more collaborative space in the future, where others will be

able to add pieces of their lives and connections to the dorm, so that the archive becomes more of a collective vision and voice that can grow with the dorm.

A final point I wish to address is the way I have chosen to omit as many names as possible from this archive. I have taken care to exclude individuals' names unless they are drawn from specific interviews already publicly available online, such as those with Zarco Guerrero and José Antonio Burciaga,. I want to ensure that this archive does not unintentionally expose anyone to undue scrutiny or surveillance. By focusing on the collective story rather than singling out individuals, I hope to respect personal boundaries while still facilitating an in-depth exploration of the dorm's history, development and community.

My Methodology

The main methodology I employed for this archive, as it stands in this moment, was archival research. I began by exploring existing digital archives, reviewing any documents, images and collections that were available online. I then visited Stanford's Special Collections at Green Library, to examine Casa Zapata records housed in the archives. This collection included four boxes—three filled with documents and one with cassette tapes. For this project, I focus exclusively on the documents housed in Box 1. Additionally, I conducted my own investigation in the dorm, documenting the current murals, historical artifacts, and other contemporary materials to contribute to this growing archival narrative.

Structure of the Archive

There is a yellow header at the top of this page, a table of contents, which directly links to the main sections of the archive.

I invite all viewers to explore these sections freely and engage with whatever aspects of Casa Zapata's story that most resonate

with them and their interests.

This archive is organized into four main sections, which are further divided into various subsections, alongside an introduction, conclusion, contact information, works cited, and image credits.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHIVE

ZAPATA'S HISTORY

- The Zapatista: An Introductory Booklet About Life in Casa Zapata
  - “This History of Casa Zapata”
  - Introduction to the Residential Staff
  - Emiliano Zapata
- The Zapatista Throughout the Years

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Mapping an Ethnic-Theme Dorm
- Muralism in Zapata
  - Casa Zapata Mural History Project
  - The First Muralist
  - Tony Burciaga: Resident Fellow and Muralist
- Murals over Time
  - Loteria Cards
  - Amal Militiamen
  - Sueños y Esperanza
  - The Spirit of Hoover Tower
  - Chicano Caricatures
- The Future of Murals at Zapata

THE COMMUNITY

- Residents and “Fourth Floorers”
- Student Leaders

- Theme Associates (TAs) & Ethnic-Theme Associates (ETAs)
- Student Staff Selections (1980s)
- Student Staff Training (1980s)

INTENTIONAL SPACE BUILDING

- In the Words of Student Leaders
- Weekly Theme Programming
- Dorm Traditions
  - Cinco de Mayo
  - Flor y Canto
- Events from the Archives
- Events Today

CONCLUSION

CONTACT

WORKS CITED

IMAGE CREDITS

ZAPATA'S HISTORY

Casa Zapata was born out of student activism, a legacy that can be traced back at least to the 1967 *Turning Point Letter*. In this letter, four undergraduate students wrote to the Dean of Admissions, urging Stanford University to increase recruitment of Latinx students and faculty (Stanford University Libraries, "Turning Point Letter," 2020). A year later, another pivotal event took place: *Take Back the Mic*, where 70 members of the Black Student Union (BSU) took the stage from the Provost and an all-white panel during convocation to present ten demands for greater support of Black students, faculty, and the nearby

community of East Palo Alto (Stanford University Libraries, "Take Back the MIC," 2020).

By 1970, following discussions between Black and Latinx students, the University introduced a minority housing program. This initiative aimed to designate certain dorms for "larger concentrations of [B]lack, Chicano and [Native] students" ("Minority Housing Program Begun" 1970). Among the dorms selected for this program were Trancos, Larkin, Lassen, Roble, and Cedro. However, communication about the program was inadequate and confusing. Incoming freshmen identified by the University as belonging to one of these three groups received a vague letter over the summer informing them about the program. Then-Assistant Dean of Students, Larry Horton, noted in an article for *The Stanford Daily* that there was "'much confusion over the letter…The meaning of it was unclear'" ("Minority Housing Program Begun" 1970). The following academic year, an Asian American house was established in Wilbur Hall ("Minority Housing Program Begun" 1970).

The University would continue to relocate these students across different dorms through the following years. It wasn't until 1972 that Casa Zapata was officially established in Stern Hall. Over the the following year, the other ethnic-theme dorms would likewise find their permanent homes and names: Ujamaa moved to Lagunita Court in 1974 and was officially renamed in 1976; students voted to rename Okada in 1979, and the dorm was relocated within Wilber Hall in 1993; Muwekma-Tah-Ruk moved to its current location on the Row in 1979 and was renamed in 1990 (Popp 2021). At every step, it was the students who fought to carve out a space for themselves, seeking to establish homes that reflected their identities and the spirit of resistance that brought these dorms to life.

The Zapatista: An Introductory Booklet About Life in Casa Zapata

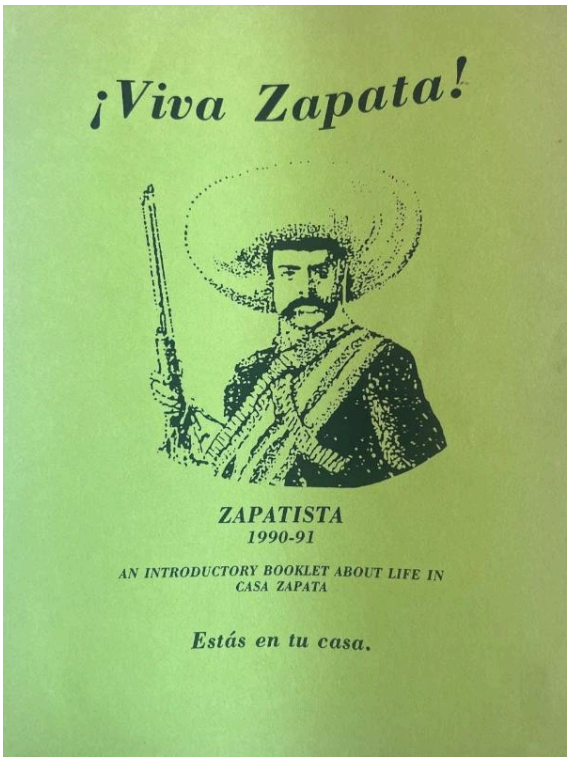


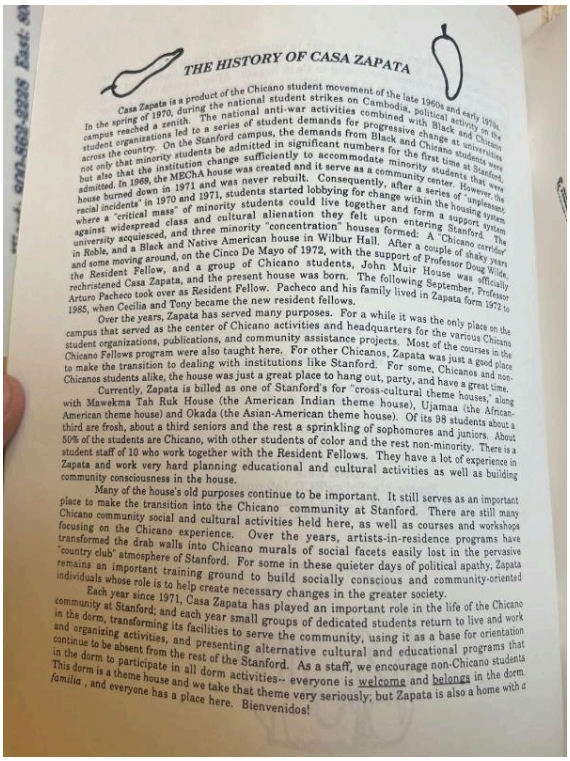
Image 1: Front cover of the 1990-91 *Zapatista*

The *Zapatista* was a recurring booklet designed to introduce new residents to life in Casa Zapata. The earliest copy I found in the archives was from the 1987-1988 academic year and continued with editions from 1990-91, 1991-92, and 1992-93. Each edition was created by Zapata's staff, offering insights into the dorm's history, traditions, and policies, among other information. The booklet opens with a warm message on its cover page—"Estás en tu casa"—and invites readers to explore various topics, including a brief history of Casa Zapata, an introduction to Emiliano Zapata, the dorm's murals, and the Residential Staff, and more. It also includes practical information like a floor plan, space reservation guidelines, and policies for communal spaces. The Zapata lounge and various in the dorm's basement are still available for residents and student organizations to reserve, although reserving the dining hall is now a separate process overseen by Stern Hall, not Casa Zapata. Many sections, such as "Traditions at Casa Zapata" and "Good Eats," offered a personal glimpse into life at the dorm and attempted to make students feel excited and comfortable for their time there.

While some contents varied slightly between editions, the *Zapatista* consistently reflected what dorm staff at the time believed would be most useful for fostering a sense of belonging, community, and comfortability among residents.

"This History of Casa Zapata"

The *Zapatista* explicitly connects the creation of Casa Zapata with the Chicano movement of the 1960s and 70s, as well as with global struggles at the time, specifically "the national student strikes on Cambodia" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461,



THE HISTORY OF CASA ZAPATA

Casa Zapata is a product of the Chicano student movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the spring of 1970, during the national student strikes on Cambodia, political activity on the campus reached a zenith. The national anti-war activities combined with Black and Chicano student organizations led to a series of student demands for progressive change at universities across the country. On the Stanford campus, the demands from Black and Chicano students were not only that minority students be admitted in significant numbers for the first time at Stanford, but also that the institution change sufficiently to accommodate minority students that were admitted. In 1969, the MEChA house was created and it serve as a community center. However the house burned down in 1971 and was never rebuilt. Consequently, after a series of "unpleasant racial incidents" in 1970 and 1971, students started lobbying for change within the housing system where a "critical mass" of minority students could live together and form a support system against widespread class and cultural alienation they felt upon entering Stanford. The university acquiesced, and three minority "concentration" houses formed: A Chicano corridor in Roble, and a Black and Native American house in Wilbur Hall. After a couple of shaky years and some moving around, on the Cinco De Mayo of 1972, with the support of Professor Doug Wilde, the Resident Fellow, and a group of Chicano students, John Muir House was officially rechristened Casa Zapata, and the present house was born. The following September, Professor Arturo Pacheco took over as Resident Fellow. Pacheco and his family lived in Zapata form 1972 to 1985, when Cecilia and Tony became the new resident fellows.

Over the years, Zapata has served many purposes. For a while it was the only place on the campus that served as the center of Chicano activities and headquarters for the various Chicano student organizations, publications, and community assistance projects. Most of the courses in the Chicano Fellows program were also taught here. For other Chicanos, Zapata was just a good place to make the transition to dealing with institutions like Stanford. For some, Chicanos and non-Chicanos students alike, the house was just a great place to hang out, party, and have a great time.

Currently, Zapata is billed as one of Stanford's for "cross-cultural theme houses," along with Mawekma Tah Ruk House (the American Indian theme house), Ujamaa (the African-American theme house) and Okada (the Asian-American theme house). Of its 98 students about a third are frosh, about a third seniors and the rest a sprinkling of sophomores and juniors. About 50% of the students are Chicano, with other students of color and the rest non-minority. There is a student staff of 10 who work together with the Resident Fellows. They have a lot of experience in Zapata and work very hard planning educational and cultural activities as well as building community consciousness in the house.

Many of the house's old purposes continue to be important. It still serves as an important place to make the transition into the Chicano community at Stanford. There are still many Chicano community social and cultural activities held here, as well as courses and workshops focusing on the Chicano experience. Over the years, artists-in-residence programs have transformed the drab walls into Chicano murals of social facets easily lost in the pervasive "country club" atmosphere of Stanford. For some in these quieter days of political apathy, Zapata remains an important training ground to build socially conscious and community-oriented individuals whose role is to help create necessary changes in the greater society.

Each year since 1971, Casa Zapata has played an important role in the life of the Chicano community at Stanford; and each year small groups of dedicated students return to live and work in the dorm, transforming its facilities to serve the community, using it as a base for orientation and organizing activities, and presenting alternative cultural and educational programs that continue to be absent from the rest of the Stanford. As a staff, we encourage non-Chicano students in the dorm to participate in all dorm activities-- everyone is welcome and belongs in the dorm. This dorm is a theme house and we take that theme very seriously; but Zapata is also a home with a *familia* , and everyone has a place here. Bienvenidos!

Image 2: "The History of Casa Zapata" as presented in the 1990-91 *Zapatista*

1990-91 *Zapatista* "The History of Casa Zapata", para. 1), referring to the anti-Vietnam war student protests of the 1970s, which were further heightened by Richard Nixon's announcement of an impending US attack on Cambodia (Cornell University Library n.d.). The booklet names these moments of widespread student protest and activism as having catalyzed the struggles of marginalized students at Stanford to demand increased admittance of marginalized students and better support for them within the University. I would further like to note the similarities between this as having sparked student response and demands on Stanford campus and student protests sparked in 2023 against the genocide in Palestine and the University's complicity in it, which sparked widespread student protests and demands for institutional, national, and global accountability.

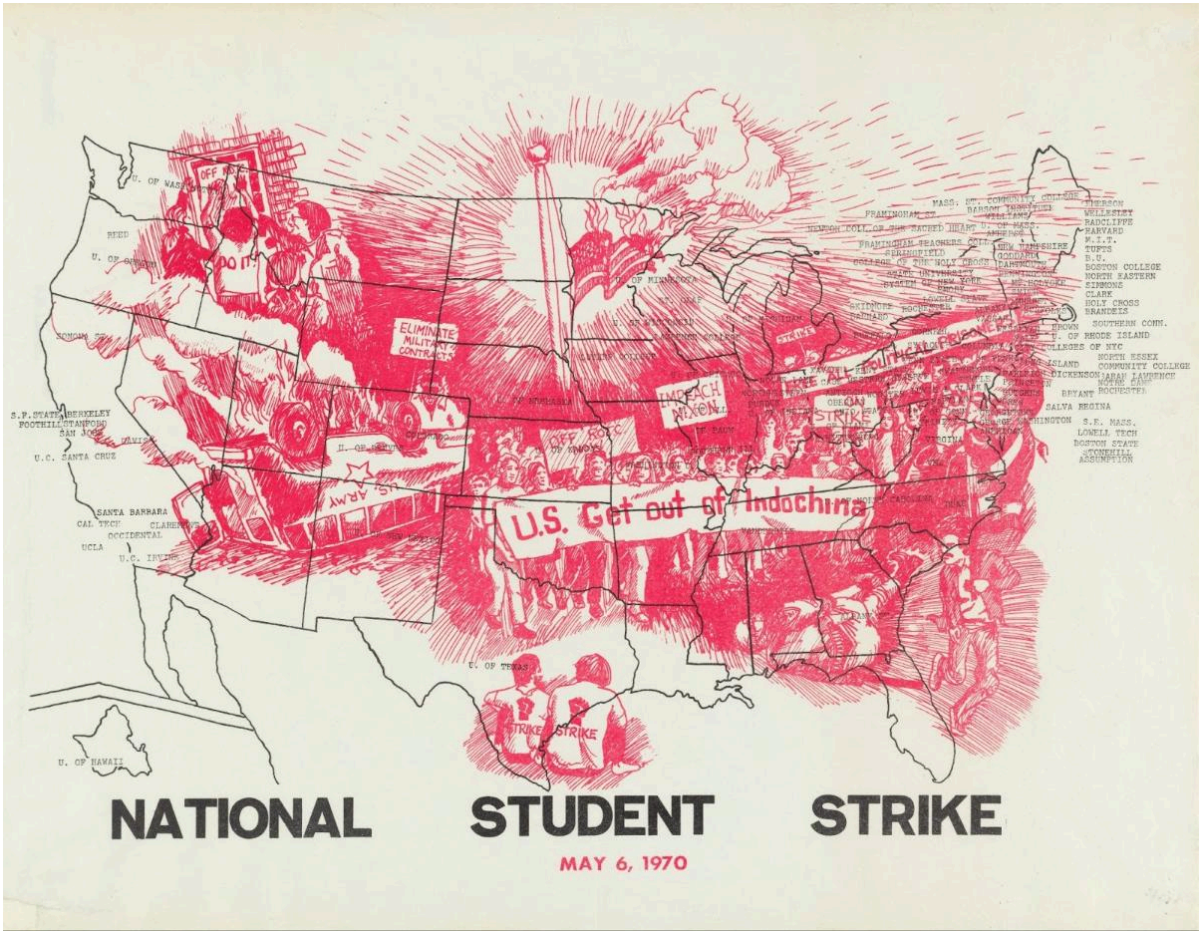
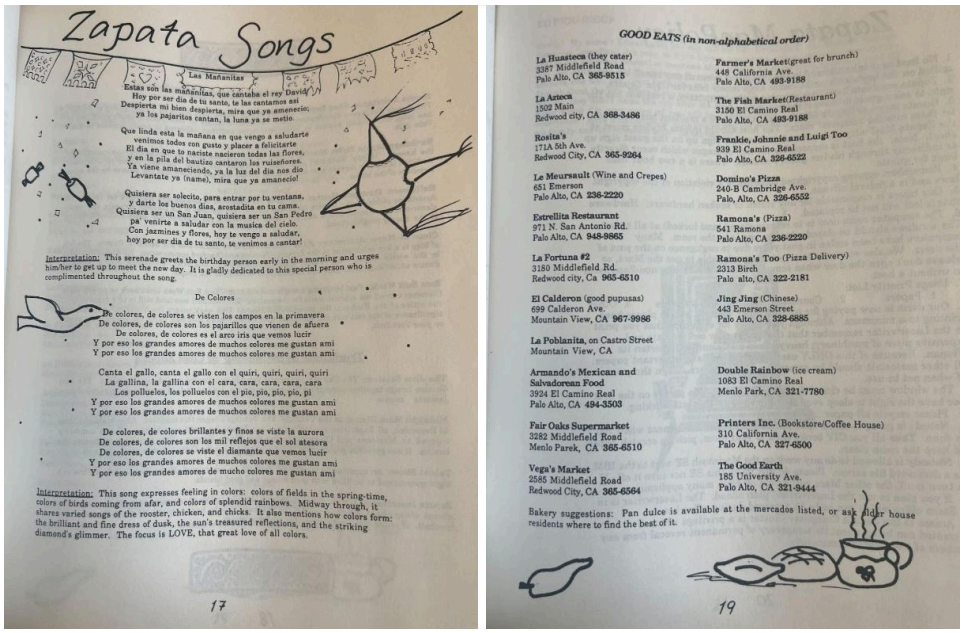


Image 3: From Cornell University – PJ Mode Collection of Persuasive Cartography

The booklet goes on to describe how "after a series of 'unpleasant racial incidents' in 1970 and 1971, students started lobbying for change within the housing system where a 'critical mass' of minority students could live together and form a support system against widespread class and cultural alienation they felt upon entering Stanford" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, 1990-91 *Zapatista* "The History of Casa Zapata", para. 1).



Zapata Songs

Las Mañanitas

Estas son las mañanitas, que cantaba el rey David
Hoy por ser día de tu santo, te las cantamos así
Despierta mi bien despierta, mira que ya amaneció,
ya los pajaritos cantan, la luna ya se metio.

Que linda esta la mañana en que vengo a saludarte
venimos todos con gusto y placer a felicitarte
El día en que tu nacistte nacieron todas las flores,
y en la pila del bautizo cantaron los ruiseñores.
Ya viene amaneciendo, ya la luz del dia nos dio
Levantate ya (name), mira que ya amaneció!

Quisiera ser solecito, para entrar por tu ventana,
y darte los buenos dias, arrestadita en tu cama.
Quisiera ser un San Juan, quisiera ser un San Pedro
pa venirte a saludar con la musica del cielo.
Con jazmines y flores, hoy te vengo a saludar,
hoy por ser dia de tu santo, te venimos a cantar!

Interpretation: This serenade greets the birthday person early in the morning and urges him/her to get up to meet the new day. It is gladly dedicated to this special person who is complimented throughout the song.

De Colores

De colores, de colores se visten los campos en la primavera
De colores, de colores son los pajarillos que vienen de añuera
De colores, de colores es el arco iris que vemos lucir
Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores me gustan ami
Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores me gustan ami

Canta el gallo, canta el gallo con el quiri, quiri, quiri, quiri
La gallina, la gallina con el cara, cara, cara, cara
Los polluelos, los polluelos con el pio, pio, pio, pio, pi
Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores me gustan ami
Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores me gustan ami

De colores, de colores brillantes y finos se viste la aurora
De colores, de colores son los mil reflejos que el sol atesora
De colores, de colores se viste el diamante que vemos lucir
Y por eso los grandes amores de muchos colores me gustan ami
Y por eso los grandes amores de mucho colores me gustan ami

Interpretation: This song expresses feeling in colors: colors of fields in the spring-time, colors of birds coming from afar, and colors of splendid rainbows. Midway through, it shares varied songs of the rooster, chicken, and chicks. It also mentions how colors form: the brilliant and fine dress of dusk, the sun's treasured reflections, and the striking diamond's glimmer. The focus is LOVE, that great love of all colors.

17

GOOD EATS (in non-alphabetical order)

La Hunateca (they cater)
3387 Middlefield Road
Palo Alto, CA 365-9515

La Arteca
1502 Main
Redwood city, CA 368-3486

Rosita's
171A 5th Ave.
Redwood City, CA 365-9264

Le Meursault (Wine and Crepes)
651 Emerson
Palo Alto, CA 236-2220

Estrellita Restaurant
971 N. San Antonio Rd.
Palo Alto, CA 948-8865

La Fortuna #2
3180 Middlefield Rd.
Redwood city, Ca 365-6510

El Calderon (good pupusas)
699 Calderon Ave.
Mountain View, CA 967-9986

La Poblanita, on Castro Street
Mountain View, CA

Armando's Mexican and Salvadorean Food
3924 El Camino Real
Palo Alto, CA 494-3503

Fair Oaks Supermarket
3282 Middlefield Road
Menlo Parek, CA 365-6510

Vega's Market
2585 Middlefield Road
Redwood City, CA 365-6564

Farmer's Market(great for brunch)
448 California Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 493-9188

The Fish Market(Restaurant)
3150 El Camino Real
Palo Alto, CA 493-9188

Frankie, Johnnie and Luigi Too
939 El Camino Real
Palo Alto, CA 326-6522

Domino's Pizza
240-B Cambridge Ave.
Palo, Alto, CA 326-6552

Ramona's (Pizza)
541 Ramona
Palo Alto, CA 236-2220

Ramona's Too (Pizza Delivery)
2313 Birch
Palo alto, CA 322-2181

Jing Jing (Chinese)
443 Emerson Street
Palo Alto, CA 328-6885

Double Rainbow (ice cream)
1083 El Camino Real
Menlo Park, CA 321-7780

Printers Inc. (Bookstore/Coffee House)
310 California Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 327-8500

The Good Earth
185 University Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 321-9444

Bakery suggestions: Pan dulce is available at the mercados listed, or ask older house residents where to find the best of it.

19

Images 4 and 5: Recommendations from the 1990-91 *Zapatista* - "Zapata Songs" and "Good Eats"

Introduction to the Residential Staff

Over the years, Casa Zapata has been shaped by the leadership of its Resident Fellows (RFs) and student staff (now referred to as student leaders).

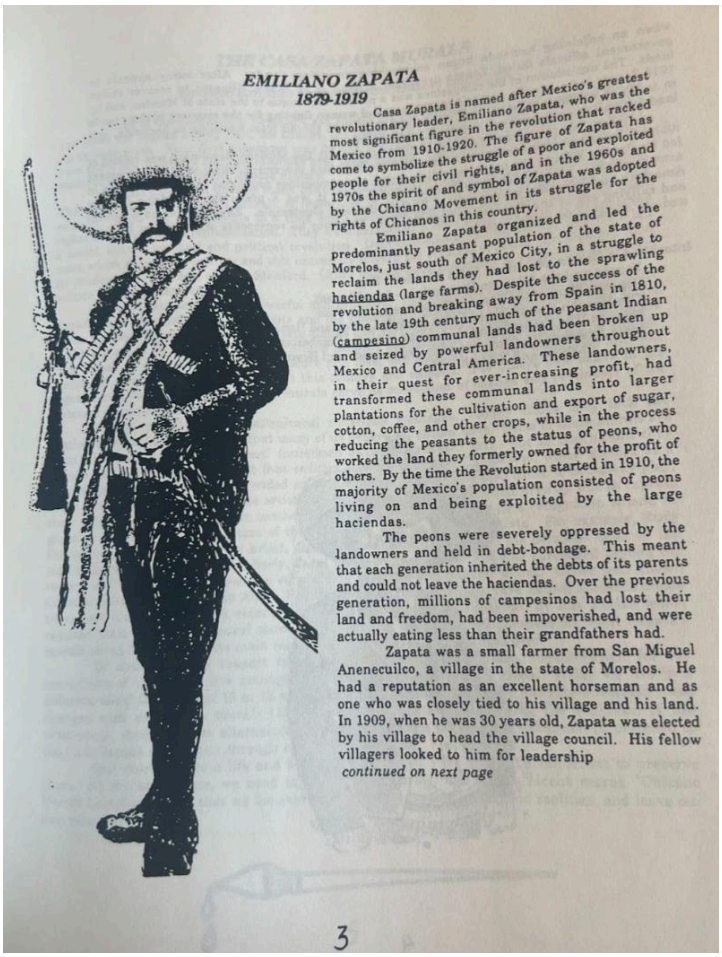
In 1972, the same year that Casa Zapata was officially established, Doug Wilde concluded his time as the RF of the dorm. Arturo Pacheco became the inaugural RF for Zapata that same year, followed by José Antonio (Tony) Burciaga and Cecilia Preciado Burciaga, who began their tenure in 1985.

The dorm's residential staff created each issue of the *Zapatista* to welcome residents. Throughout the 1990-91 edition, they explicitly emphasized the inherently political nature of the dorm. Notably, in "The History of Casa Zapata," where they express how, "For some in these quieter days of political apathy, Zapata remains an important training ground to build socially conscious and community-oriented individuals whose role is to help create necessary changes in the greater society" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, 1990-91 *Zapatista* "The History of Casa Zapata", para. 4). This statement underscores the dorm's intentional efforts towards cultivating awareness, activism, and

community engagement among its residents— a mission that continues today. Casa Zapata, and the other ethnic theme dorms on campus, cannot be separated from their political roots and work.

Emiliano Zapata

The *Zapatista* also provides context for the dorm's namesake, Emiliano Zapata. Emiliano Zapata, a communist Mexican Indigenous and agrarian revolutionary and a central figure in Mexico's 1910 revolution, championed "tierra y libertad" for rural and Indigenous communities oppressed by landowners and government forces. His ideals greatly influenced modern Mexican movements advocating land reform, Indigenous autonomy, and anti-capitalist resistance. This legacy directly connects to the Ejército Zapatista de la Liberación Nacional (EZLN). Established in 1994, the EZLN rose in opposition to government neglect and abuses against Indigenous communities, Indigenous rights, self-governance, and land redistribution (Gutíerrez Vásquez 2023). The EZLN continues to expand Zapata's vision of justice and communal land ownership, challenging neoliberal policies and emphasizing Indigenous self-determination.



EMILIANO ZAPATA
1879-1919

Casa Zapata is named after Mexico's greatest revolutionary leader, Emiliano Zapata, who was the most significant figure in the revolution that racked Mexico from 1910-1920. The figure of Zapata has come to symbolize the struggle of a poor and exploited people for their civil rights, and in the 1960s and 1970s the spirit of and symbol of Zapata was adopted by the Chicano Movement in its struggle for the rights of Chicanos in this country.

Emiliano Zapata organized and led the predominantly peasant population of the state of Morelos, just south of Mexico City, in a struggle to reclaim the lands they had lost to the sprawling haciendas (large farms). Despite the success of the revolution and breaking away from Spain in 1810, by the late 19th century much of the peasant Indian (campesino) communal lands had been broken up and seized by powerful landowners throughout Mexico and Central America. These landowners, in their quest for ever-increasing profit, had transformed these communal lands into larger plantations for the cultivation and export of sugar, cotton, coffee, and other crops, while in the process reducing the peasants to the status of peons, who worked the land they formerly owned for the profit of others. By the time the Revolution started in 1910, the majority of Mexico's population consisted of peons living on and being exploited by the large haciendas.

The peons were severely oppressed by the landowners and held in debt-bondage. This meant that each generation inherited the debts of its parents and could not leave the haciendas. Over the previous generation, millions of campesinos had lost their land and freedom, had been impoverished, and were actually eating less than their grandfathers had.

Zapata was a small farmer from San Miguel Anenecuilco, a village in the state of Morelos. He had a reputation as an excellent horseman and as one who was closely tied to his village and his land. In 1909, when he was 30 years old, Zapata was elected by his village to head the village council. His fellow villagers looked to him for leadership

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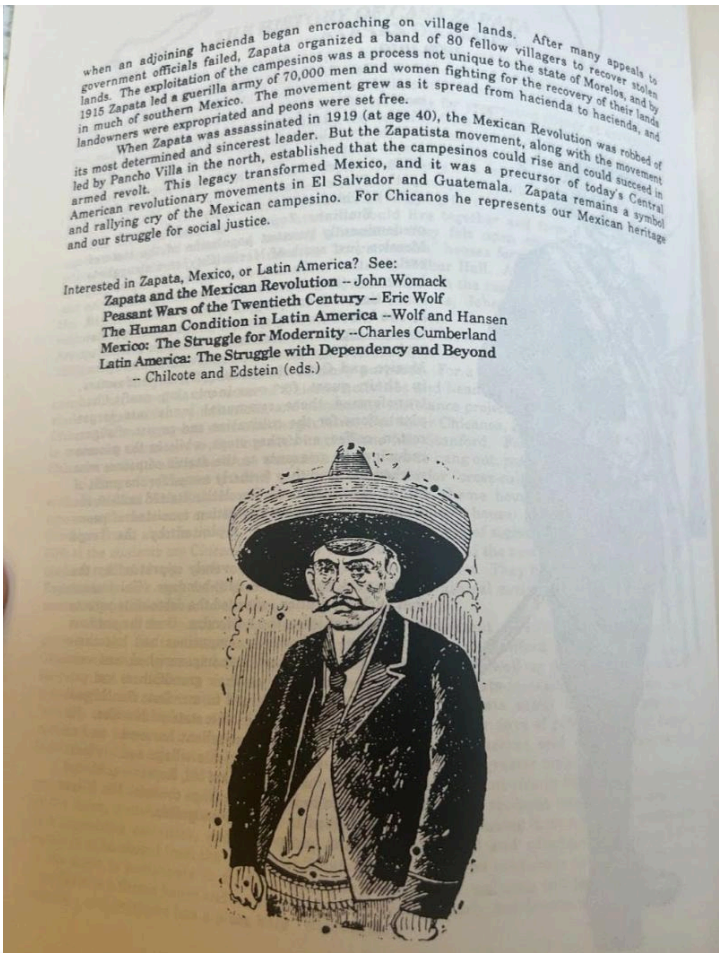


when an adjoining hacienda began encroaching on village lands. After many appeals to government officials failed, Zapata organized a band of 80 fellow villagers to recover stolen lands. The exploitation of the campesinos was a process not unique to the state of Morelos, and by 1915 Zapata led a guerilla army of 70,000 men and women fighting for the recovery of their lands in much of southern Mexico. The movement grew as it spread from hacienda to hacienda, and landowners were expropriated and peons were set free.

When Zapata was assassinated in 1919 (at age 40), the Mexican Revolution was robbed of its most determined and sincerest leader. But the Zapatista movement, along with the movement led by Pancho Villa in the north, established that the campesinos could rise and could succeed in armed revolt. This legacy transformed Mexico, and it was a precursor of today's Central American revolutionary movements in El Salvador and Guatemala. Zapata remains a symbol and rallying cry of the Mexican campesino. For Chicanos he represents our Mexican heritage and our struggle for social justice.

Interested in Zapata, Mexico, or Latin America? See:

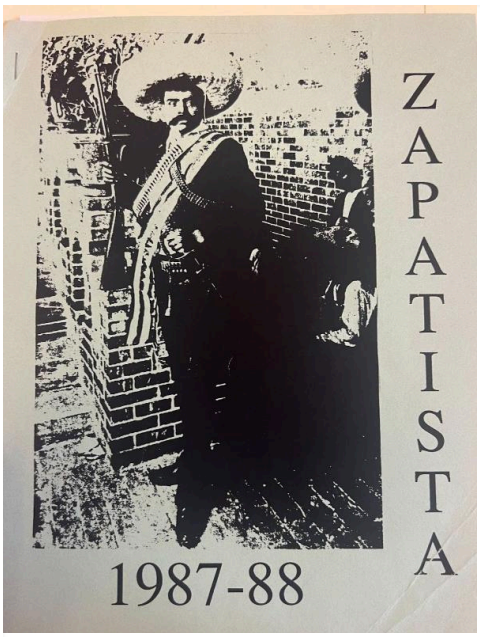
Zapata and the Mexican Revolution -- John Womack
Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century – Eric Wolf
The Human Condition in Latin America --Wolf and Hansen
Mexico: The Struggle for Modernity --Charles Cumberland
Latin America: The Struggle with Dependency and Beyond -- Chilcote and Edstein (eds.)

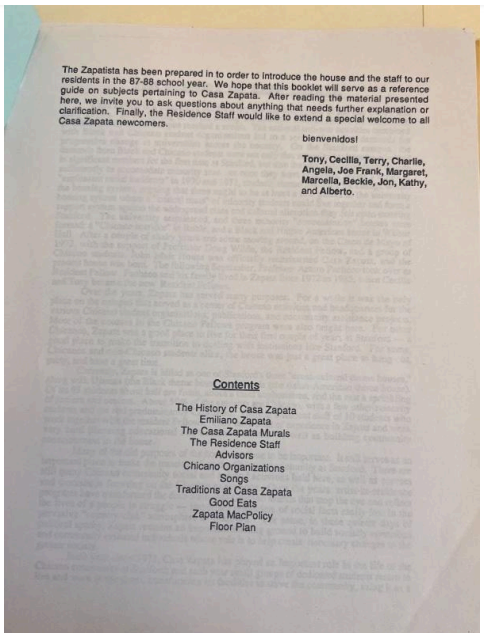
Images 6 and 7: The 1990-91 *Zapatista*'s Introduction to Emiliano Zapata

The booklet notes how “the figure of Zapata has come to symbolize the struggle of a poor and exploited people for their civil rights…” (cite, para. 1). Today, Emiliano Zapata and other revolutionary figures such as Che Guevara have become central to the aesthetics and politics of Casa Zapata.

The Zapatista Throughout the Years

1987-1988



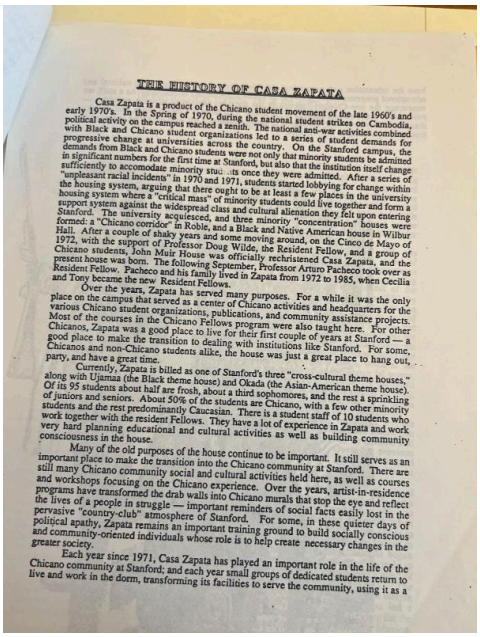

The Zapatista has been prepared in to order to introduce the house and the staff to our residents in the 87-88 school year. We hope that this booklet will serve as a reference guide on subjects pertaining to Casa Zapata. After reading the material presented here, we invite you to ask questions about anything that needs further explanation or clarification. Finally, the Residence Staff would like to extend a special welcome to all Casa Zapata newcomers.

bienvenidos!

Tony, Cecilia, Terry, Charlie, Angela, Joe Frank, Margaret, Marcella, Beckie, Jon, Kathy, and Alberto.

Contents

The History of Casa Zapata
Emiliano Zapata
The Casa Zapata Murals
The Residence Staff
Advisors
Chicano Organizations
Songs
Traditions at Casa Zapata
Good Eats
Zapata MacPolicy
Floor Plan


THE HISTORY OF CASA ZAPATA

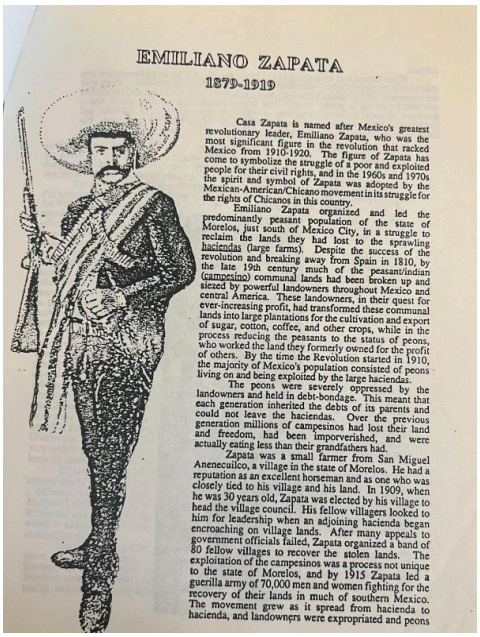
Casa Zapata is a product of the Chicano student movement of the late 1960's and early 1970's. In the Spring of 1970, during the national student strikes on Cambodia, political activity on the campus reached a zenith. The national anti-war activities combined with Black and Chicano student organizations led to a series of student demands for progressive change at universities across the country. On the Stanford campus, the demands from Black and Chicano students were not only that minority students be admitted in significant numbers for the first time at Stanford, but also that the institution itself change sufficiently to accomodate minority stu...its once they were admitted. After a series of "unpleasant racial incidents" in 1970 and 1971, students started lobbying for change within the housing system, arguing that there ought to be at least a few places in the university housing system where a "critical mass" of minority students could live together and form a support system against the widespread class and cultural alienation they felt upon entering Stanford. The university acquiesced, and three minority "concentration" houses were formed: a "Chicano corridor" in Roble, and a Black and Native American house in Wilbur Hall. After a couple of shaky years and some moving around, on the Cinco de Mayo of 1972, with the support of Professor Doug Wilde, the Resident Fellow, and a group of Chicano students, John Muir House was officially rechristened Casa Zapata, and the present house was born. The following September, Professor Arturo Pacheco took over as Resident Fellow. Pacheco and his family lived in Zapata from 1972 to 1985, when Cecilia and Tony became the new Resident Fellows.

Over the years, Zapata has served many purposes. For a while it was the only place on the campus that served as a center of Chicano activities and headquarters for the various Chicano student organizations, publications, and community assistance projects. Most of the courses in the Chicano Fellows program were also taught here. For other Chicanos, Zapata was a good place to live for their first couple of years at Stanford — a good place to make the transition to dealing with institutions like Stanford. For some, Chicanos and non-Chicano students alike, the house was just a great place to hang out, party, and have a great time.

Currently, Zapata is billed as one of Stanford's three "cross-cultural theme houses," along with Ujamaa (the Black theme house) and Okada (the Asian-American theme house). Of its 95 students about half are frosh, about a third sophomores, and the rest a sprinkling of juniors and seniors. About 50% of the students are Chicano, with a few other minority students and the rest predominantly Caucasian. There is a student staff of 10 students who work together with the resident Fellows. They have a lot of experience in Zapata and work very hard planning educational and cultural activities as well as building community consciousness in the house.

Many of the old purposes of the house continue to be important. It still serves as an important place to make the transition into the Chicano community at Stanford. There are still many Chicano community social and cultural activities held here, as well as courses and workshops focusing on the Chicano experience. Over the years, artist-in-residence programs have transformed the drab walls into Chicano murals that stop the eye and reflect the lives of a people in struggle — important reminders of social facts easily lost in the pervasive "country-club" atmosphere of Stanford. For some, in these quieter days of political apathy, Zapata remains an important training ground to build socially conscious and community-oriented individuals whose role is to help create necessary changes in the greater society.

Each year since 1971, Casa Zapata has played an important role in the life of the Chicano community at Stanford; and each year small groups of dedicated students return to live and work in the dorm, transforming its facilities to serve the community, using it as a

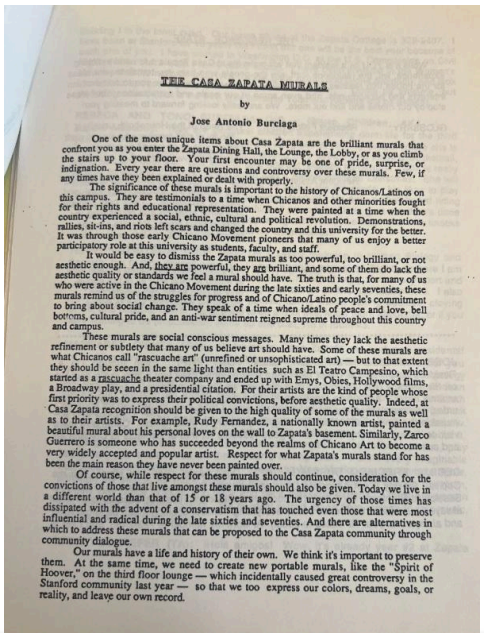

EMILIANO ZAPATA
1879-1919

Casa Zapata is named after Mexico's greatest revolutionary leader, Emiliano Zapata, who was the most significant figure in the revolution that racked Mexico from 1910-1920. The figure of Zapata has come to symbolize the struggle of a poor and exploited people for their civil rights, and in the 1960s and 1970s the spirit and symbol of Zapata was adopted by the Mexican-American/Chicano movement in its struggle for the rights of Chicanos in this country.

Emiliano Zapata organized and led the predominantly peasant population of the state of Morelos, just south of Mexico City, in a struggle to reclaim the lands they had lost to the sprawling haciendas (large farms). Despite the success of the revolution and breaking away from Spain in 1810, by the late 19th century much of the peasant/indian (campesino) communal lands had been broken up and sized by powerful landowners throughout Mexico and central America. These landowners, in their quest for ever-increasing profit, had transformed these communal lands into large plantations for the cultivation and export of sugar, cotton, coffee, and other crops, while in the process reducing the peasants to the status of peons, who worked the land they formerly owned for the profit of others. By the time the Revolution started in 1910, the majority of Mexico's population consisted of peons living on and being exploited by the large haciendas.

The peons were severely oppressed by the landowners and held in debt-bondage. This meant that each generation inherited the debts of its parents and could not leave the haciendas. Over the previous generation millions of campesinos had lost their land and freedom, had been imporverished, and were actually eating less than their grandfathers had.

Zapata was a small farmer from San Miguel Anenecuilco, a village in the state of Morelos. He had a reputation as an excellent horseman and as one who was closely tied to his village and his land. In 1909, when he was 30 years old, Zapata was elected by his village to head the village council. His fellow villagers looked to him for leadership when an adjoining hacienda began encroaching on village lands. After many appeals to government officials failed, Zapata organized a band of 80 fellow villages to recover the stolen lands. The exploitation of the campesinos was a process not unique to the state of Morelos, and by 1915 Zapata led a guerilla army of 70,000 men and women fighting for the recovery of their lands in much of southern Mexico. The movement grew as it spread from hacienda to hacienda, and landowners were expropriated and peons


THE CASA ZAPATA MURALS

by

Jose Antonio Burciaga

One of the most unique items about Casa Zapata are the brilliant murals that confront you as you enter the Zapata Dining Hall, the Lounge, the Lobby, or as you climb the stairs up to your floor. Your first encounter may be one of pride, surprise, or indignation. Every year there are questions and controversy over these murals. Few, if any times have they been explained or dealt with properly.

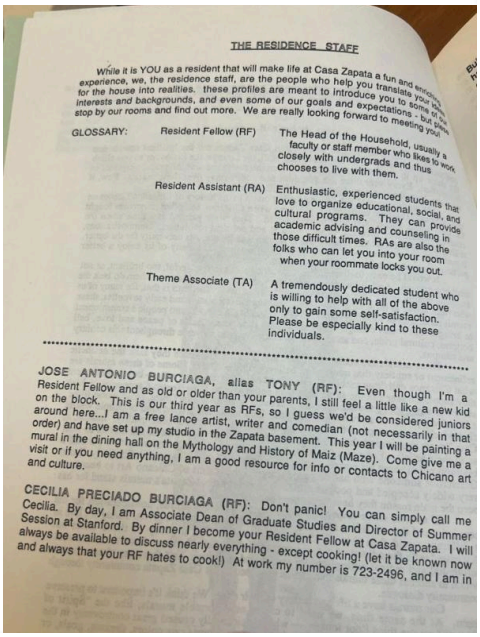
The significance of these murals is important to the history of Chicanos/Latinos on this campus. They are testimonials to a time when Chicanos and other minorities fought for their rights and educational representation. They were painted at a time when the country experienced a social, ethnic, cultural and political revolution. Demonstrations, rallies, sit-ins, and riots left scars and changed the country and this university for the better. It was through those early Chicano Movement pioneers that many of us enjoy a better participatory role at this university as students, faculty, and staff.

It would be easy to dismiss the Zapata murals as too powerful, too brilliant, or not aesthetic enough. And, they are powerful, they are brilliant, and some of them do lack the aesthetic quality or standards we feel a mural should have. The truth is that, for many of us who were active in the Chicano Movement during the late sixties and early seventies, these murals remind us of the struggles for progress and of Chicano/Latino people's commitment to bring about social change. They speak of a time when ideals of peace and love, bell bottoms, cultural pride, and an anti-war sentiment reigned supreme throughout this country and campus.

These murals are social conscious messages. Many times they lack the aesthetic refinement or subtlety that many of us believe art should have. Some of these murals are what Chicanos call "rascuache art" (unrefined or unsophisticated art) — but to that extent they should be seeen in the same light than entities such as El Teatro Campesino, which started as a rascuache theater company and ended up with Emys, Obies, Hollywood films, a Broadway play, and a presidential citation. For their artists are the kind of people whose first priority was to express their political convictions, before aesthetic quality. Indeed, at Casa Zapata recognition should be given to the high quality of some of the murals as well as to their artists. For example, Rudy Fernandez, a nationally known artist, painted a beautiful mural about his personal loves on the wall to Zapata's basement. Similarly, Zarco Guerrero is someone who has succeeded beyond the realms of Chicano Art to become a very widely accepted and popular artist. Respect for what Zapata's murals stand for has been the main reason they have never been painted over.

Of course, while respect for these murals should continue, consideration for the convictions of those that live amongst these murals should also be given. Today we live in a different world than that of 15 or 18 years ago. The urgency of those times has dissipated with the advent of a conservatism that has touched even those that were most influential and radical during the late sixties and seventies. And there are alternatives in which to address these murals that can be proposed to the Casa Zapata community through community dialogue.

Our murals have a life and history of their own. We think it's important to preserve them. At the same time, we need to create new portable murals, like the "Spirit of Hoover," on the third floor lounge — which incidentally caused great controversy in the Stanford community last year — so that we too express our colors, dreams, goals, or reality, and leave our own record.


THE RESIDENCE STAFF

While it is YOU as a resident that will make life at Casa Zapata a fun and enriching experience, we, the residence staff, are the people who help you translate your wishes for the house into realities. these profiles are meant to introduce you to some of our interests and backgrounds, and even some of our goals and expectations - but please stop by our rooms and find out more. We are really looking forward to meeting you!

GLOSSARY:

Resident Fellow (RF): The Head of the Household, usually a faculty or staff member who likes to work closely with undergrads and thus chooses to live with them.

Resident Assistant (RA): Enthusiastic, experienced students that love to organize educational, social, and cultural programs. They can provide academic advising and counseling in those difficult times. RAs are also the folks who can let you into your room when your roommate locks you out.

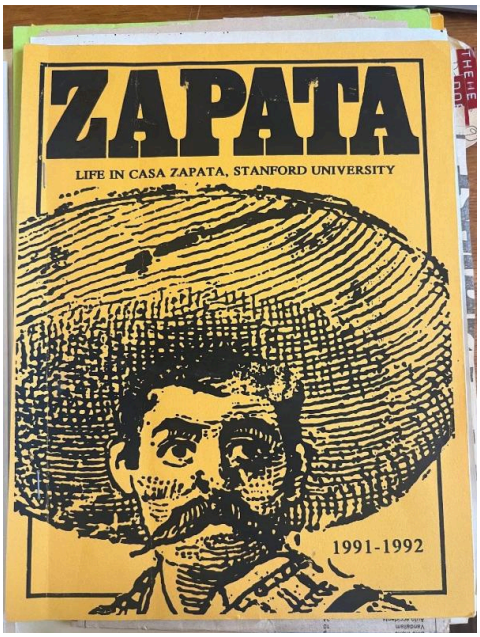
Theme Associate (TA): A tremendously dedicated student who is willing to help with all of the above only to gain some self-satisfaction. Please be especially kind to these individuals.

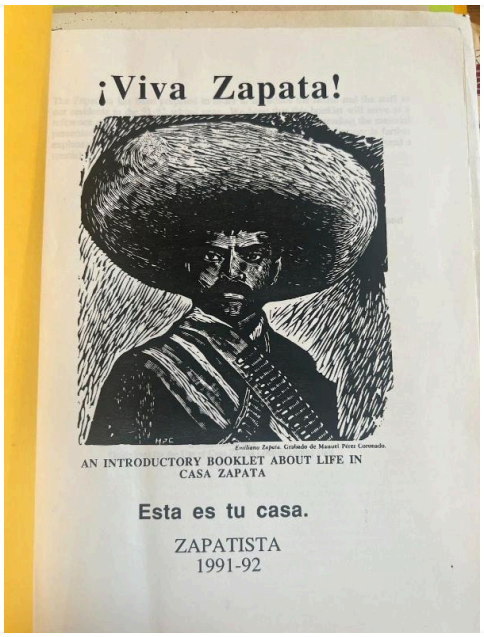
JOSE ANTONIO BURCIAGA, alias TONY (RF): Even though I'm a Resident Fellow and as old or older than your parents, I still feel a little like a new kid on the block. This is our third year as RFs, so I guess we'd be considered juniors around here...I am a free lance artist, writer and comedian (not necessarily in that order) and have set up my studio in the Zapata basement. This year I will be painting a mural in the dining hall on the Mythology and History of Maiz (Maze). Come give me a visit or if you need anything, I am a good resource for info or contacts to Chicano art and culture.

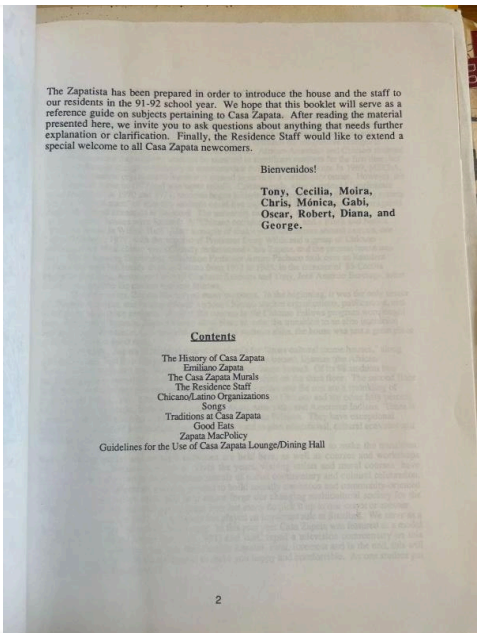
CECILIA PRECIADO BURCIAGA (RF): Don't panic! You can simply call me Cecilia. By day, I am Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Director of Summer Session at Stanford. By dinner I become your Resident Fellow at Casa Zapata. I will always be available to discuss nearly everything - except cooking! (let it be known now and always that your RF hates to cook!) At work my number is 723-2496, and I am in

Images 8-13: Pages from the 1987-88 *Zapatista*

1991–1992

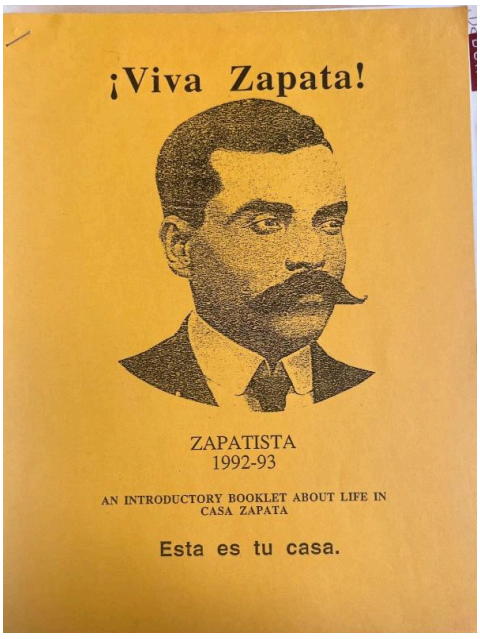


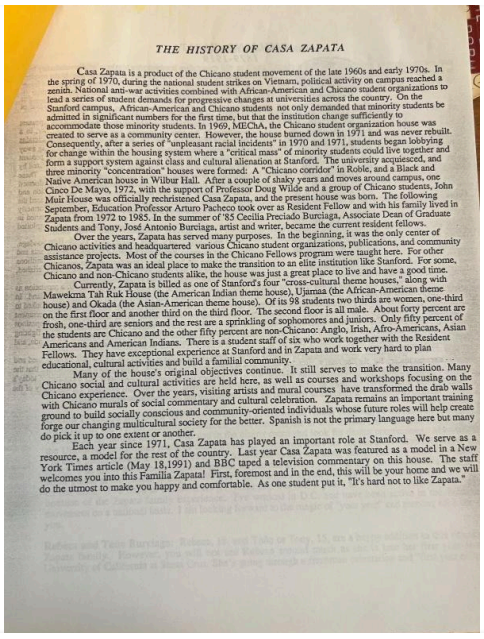


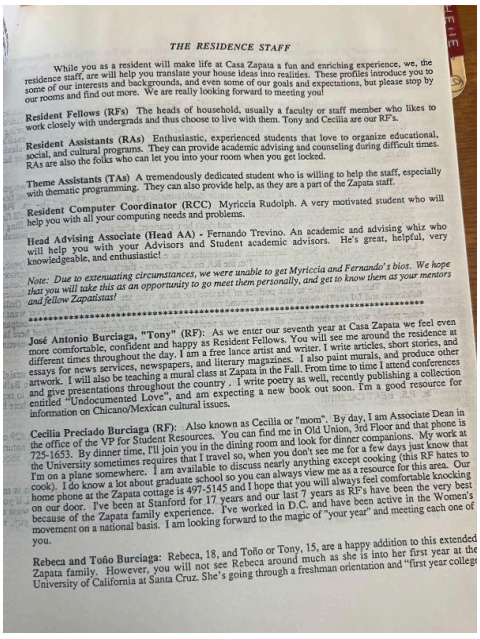

The Zapatista has been prepared in order to introduce the house and the staff to our residents in the 91-92 school year. We hope that this booklet will serve as a reference guide on subjects pertaining to Casa Zapata. After reading the material presented here, we invite you to ask questions about anything that needs further explanation or clarification. Finally, the Residence Staff would like to extend a special welcome to all Casa Zapata newcomers.
Bienvenidos!
Tony, Cecilia, Moira, Chris, Mónica, Gabi, Oscar, Robert, Diana, and George.
Contents
The History of Casa Zapata
Emiliano Zapata
The Casa Zapata Murals
The Residence Staff
Chicano/Latino Organizations
Songs
Traditions at Casa Zapata
Good Eats
Zapata MacPolicy
Guidelines for the Use of Casa Zapata Lounge/Dining Hall
2

Images 14-16: Pages from the 1991-92 *Zapatista*

1992-1993




THE HISTORY OF CASA ZAPATA
Casa Zapata is a product of the Chicano student movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the spring of 1970, during the national student strikes on Vietnam, political activity on campus reached a zenith. National anti-war activities combined with African-American and Chicano student organizations to lead a series of student demands for progressive changes at universities across the country. On the Stanford campus, African-American and Chicano students not only demanded that minority students be admitted in significant numbers for the first time, but that the institution change sufficiently to accommodate those minority students. In 1969, MEChA, the Chicano student organization house was created to serve as a community center. However, the house burned down in 1971 and was never rebuilt. Consequently, after a series of "unpleasant racial incidents" in 1970 and 1971, students began lobbying for change within the housing system where a "critical mass" of minority students could live together and form a support system against class and cultural alienation at Stanford. The university acquiesced, and three minority "concentration" houses were formed: A "Chicano corridor" in Roble, and a Black and Native American house in Wilbur Hall. After a couple of shaky years and moves around campus, one Cinco De Mayo, 1972, with the support of Professor Doug Wilde and a group of Chicano students, John Muir House was officially rechristened Casa Zapata, and the present house was born. The following September, Education Professor Arturo Pacheco took over as Resident Fellow and with his family lived in Zapata from 1972 to 1985. In the summer of '85 Cecilia Preciado Burciaga, Associate Dean of Graduate Students and Tony, José Antonio Burciaga, artist and writer, became the current resident fellows.
Over the years, Zapata has served many purposes. In the beginning, it was the only center of Chicano activities and headquartered various Chicano student organizations, publications, and community assistance projects. Most of the courses in the Chicano Fellows program were taught here. For other Chicanos, Zapata was an ideal place to make the transition to an elite institution like Stanford. For some, Chicano and non-Chicano students alike, the house was just a great place to live and have a good time.
Currently, Zapata is billed as one of Stanford's four "cross-cultural theme houses," along with Mawekma Tah Ruk House (the American Indian theme house), Ujamaa (the African-American theme house) and Okada (the Asian-American theme house). Of its 98 students two thirds are women, one-third on the first floor and another third on the third floor. The second floor is all male. About forty percent are frosh, one-third are seniors and the rest are a sprinkling of sophomores and juniors. Only fifty percent of the students are Chicano and the other fifty percent are non-Chicano: Anglo, Irish, Afro-Americans, Asian Americans and American Indians. There is a student staff of six who work together with the Resident Fellows. They have exceptional experience at Stanford and in Zapata and work very hard to plan educational, cultural activities and build a familial community.
Many of the house's original objectives continue. It still serves to make the transition. Many Chicano social and cultural activities are held here, as well as courses and workshops focusing on the Chicano experience. Over the years, visiting artists and mural courses have transformed the drab walls with Chicano murals of social commentary and cultural celebration. Zapata remains an important training ground to build socially conscious and community-oriented individuals whose future roles will help create forge our changing multicultural society for the better. Spanish is not the primary language here but many do pick it up to one extent or another.
Each year since 1971, Casa Zapata has played an important role at Stanford. We serve as a resource, a model for the rest of the country. Last year Casa Zapata was featured as a model in a New York Times article (May 18,1991) and BBC taped a television commentary on this house. The staff welcomes you into this Familia Zapata! First, foremost and in the end, this will be your home and we will do the utmost to make you happy and comfortable. As one student put it, "It's hard not to like Zapata."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Resident Fellows (RFs) The heads of household, usually a faculty or staff member who likes to work closely with undergrads and thus choose to live with them. Tony and Cecilia are our RF's.
Resident Assistants (RAs) Enthusiastic, experienced students that love to organize educational, social, and cultural programs. They can provide academic advising and counseling during difficult times. RAs are also the folks who can let you into your room when you get locked.
Theme Assistants (TAs) A tremendously dedicated student who is willing to help the staff, especially with thematic programming. They can also provide help, as they are a part of the Zapata staff.
Resident Computer Coordinator (RCC) Myriccia Rudolph. A very motivated student who will help you with all your computing needs and problems.
Head Advising Associate (Head AA) - Fernando Trevino. An academic and advising whiz who will help you with your Advisors and Student academic advisors. He's great, helpful, very knowledgeable, and enthusiastic!
Note: Due to extenuating circumstances, we were unable to get Myriccia and Fernando's bios. We hope that you will take this as an opportunity to go meet them personally, and get to know them as your mentors and fellow Zapatistas!
José Antonio Burciaga, "Tony" (RF): As we enter our seventh year at Casa Zapata we feel even more comfortable, confident and happy as Resident Fellows. You will see me around the residence at different times throughout the day. I am a free lance artist and writer. I write articles, short stories, and essays for news services, newspapers, and literary magazines. I also paint murals, and produce other artwork. I will also be teaching a mural class at Zapata in the Fall. From time to time I attend conferences and give presentations throughout the country . I write poetry as well, recently publishing a collection entitled "Undocumented Love", and am expecting a new book out soon. I'm a good resource for information on Chicano/Mexican cultural issues.
Cecilia Preciado Burciaga (RF): Also known as Cecilia or "mom". By day, I am Associate Dean in the office of the VP for Student Resources. You can find me in Old Union, 3rd Floor and that phone is 725-1653. By dinner time, I'll join you in the dining room and look for dinner companions. My work at the University sometimes requires that I travel so, when you don't see me for a few days just know that I'm on a plane somewhere. I am available to discuss nearly anything except cooking (this RF hates to cook). I do know a lot about graduate school so you can always view me as a resource for this area. Our home phone at the Zapata cottage is 497-5145 and I hope that you will always feel comfortable knocking on our door. I've been at Stanford for 17 years and our last 7 years as RF's have been the very best because of the Zapata family experience. I've worked in D.C. and have been active in the Women's movement on a national basis. I am looking forward to the magic of "your year" and meeting each one of you.
Rebeca and Toño Burciaga: Rebeca, 18, and Toño or Tony, 15, are a happy addition to this extended Zapata family. However, you will not see Rebeca around much as she is into her first year at the University of California at Santa Cruz. She's going through a freshman orientation and "first year college

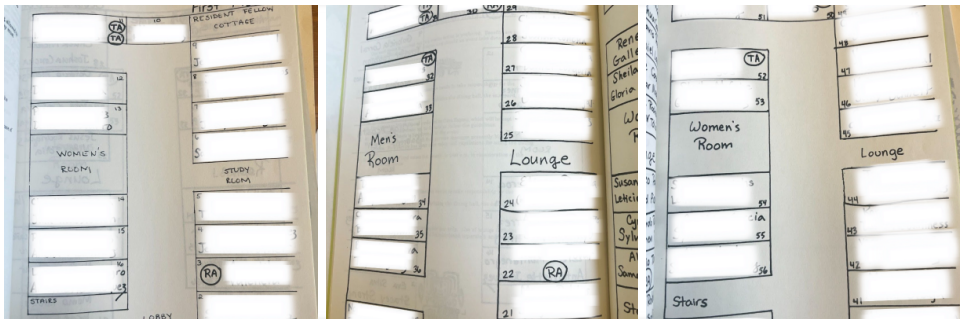
Images 17-19: Pages from the 1992-93 *Zapatista*

◆ ◆

PHYSICAL SPACE

Mapping an Ethnic-Theme Dorm

Out of the many sections of the 1990-91 *Zapatista*, one stood out to me above the rest: a hand-drawn map of the dorm, laying out room assignments and common spaces of the dorm.



Images 20-22: Hand-drawn map of Zapata from the 1990-91 *Zapatista* (names of residents have been removed for privacy)

Seeing the hand-drawn map of the space from the 90s inspired me to create one for the dorm today. For those exploring this archive who have interacted with Zapata before—whether as a resident, Fourth Floor, or other visitor—I invite you to try this as well, if not by mapping Zapata then by mapping another place that you are connected to.

What did you notice about your drawing or the way you imagine these spaces? What did you include, and what did you leave out?

I want to take a moment to reflect on the power of mapping and how it shapes the ways we represent and understand the world around us, recognizing that "rather than simply revealing knowledge about the world, maps help create the world" (Bellone et al. 2020, 18). In "Mapping as tacit representations of the colonial gaze" (2020), authors Tamara Bellone, Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro, Francesco Fiermonte, Emiliana Armano and Linda Quiquivix critique the way modern mapping practices are embedded in colonial ideologies. They argue that maps often reinforce hierarchical structures of domination, stating that "...the work that modern maps do in situating the viewer above and outside space, for such a view has been key in fostering a false sense of separateness between the viewer and what is

viewed, promoting the notion of space as an object and engendering a geographical imagination where nature and its local inhabitants have become merely resources for settlement, domination and exploitation" (Bellone et al. 2020, 18).

How, then, might we go about reimagining, or "queering," the practice of mapping. One example of this is the work of Queering the Map, "a community-generated counter-mapping platform" where the experiences of LGBTQ+ peoples have been digitally mapped and represented in relation to space. This platform, one where users plot themselves on a map of the world and write in as much or as little as they'd like to share of their own queer experience(s), has been used not only as a way of reclaiming a space for queer folk in a world still full of transphobic and queerphobic legislation, but also as a form of resistance against colonization and the erasure of Indigenous peoples from their homelands. The most recent example of this has been the way that queer Palestinians have used the platform to assert their identity and place in their homelands as a way to counter the pinkwashing efforts which "not only implies that there are no LGBTQ Palestinians but also that they cannot possibly be accepted as they are, *where* they are. In other words, they must flee to a more 'civilized' society, i.e., a white, European one" (O'Neal 2023, para. 4).

As we engage in mapping and representing the places around us, we should consider whose ancestral lands we occupy, the spaces we aim to create, and how we (re)imagine the world.

Muralism in Zapata

Casa Zapata Mural History Project

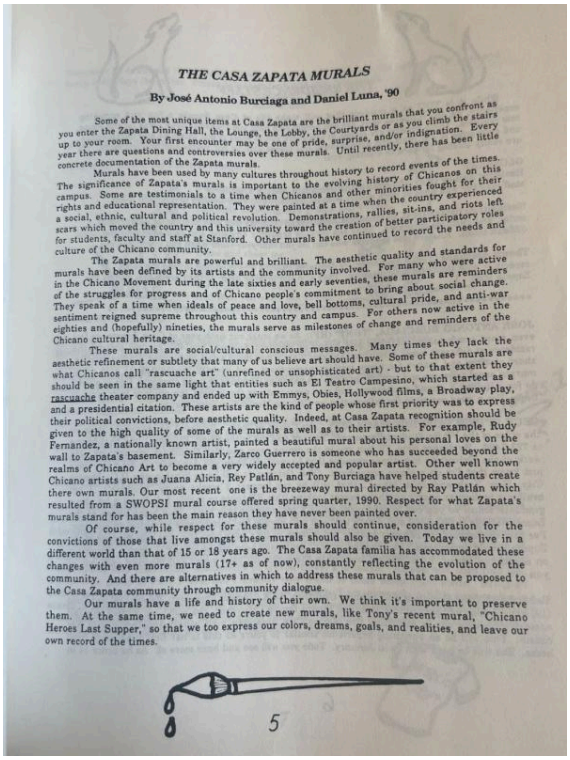
Before diving into the murals that line the halls of Casa Zapata and the artists that brought them to life, I wanted to first introduce another student-led project that explored the very same topic: the Casa Zapata Mural History Project website.

Created by students and faculty, this is a collaborative website dedicated to archiving the history of the murals in Casa Zapata. The project aimed to document the creation, evolution, and cultural significance of these murals over the years. It includes information about some of the dorm's muralists like José Antonio Burciaga, photos of the murals, and commentary on their historical and political contexts.

Though the website remains unfinished, it provides a valuable starting point for contextualizing the murals in and around Casa Zapata—especially those in Stern Dining Hall, which this archive does not explore in depth.

Tony Burciaga: Zapata's Resident Fellow and Muralist

In the 1990-91 *Zapatista*, José Antonio (Tony) Burciaga and Daniel Luna provided an introduction to the dorm's murals, emphasizing their cultural and historical significance. Burciaga was not only an RF of the dorm but also a key artist in bringing to life many of the murals in the space and its surroundings, including *History and Mythology of Maiz* and *The Last Supper of Chicano Heroes* in Stern dining (refer to the Casa Zapata Mural History Project website for images and more information on these murals).



THE CASA ZAPATA MURALS

By José Antonio Burciaga and Daniel Luna, '90

Some of the most unique items at Casa Zapata are the brilliant murals that you confront as you enter the Zapata Dining Hall, the Lounge, the Lobby, the Courtyards or as you climb the stairs up to your room. Your first encounter may be one of pride, surprise, and/or indignation. Every year there are questions and controversies over these murals. Until recently, there has been little concrete documentation of the Zapata murals.

Murals have been used by many cultures throughout history to record events of the times. The significance of Zapata's murals is important to the evolving history of Chicanos on this campus. Some are testimonials to a time when Chicanos and other minorities fought for their rights and educational representation. They were painted at a time when the country experienced a social, ethnic, cultural and political revolution. Demonstrations, rallies, sit-ins, and riots left scars which moved the country and this university toward the creation of better participatory roles for students, faculty and staff at Stanford. Other murals have continued to record the needs and culture of the Chicano community.

The Zapata murals are powerful and brilliant. The aesthetic quality and standards for murals have been defined by its artists and the community involved. For many who were active in the Chicano Movement during the late sixties and early seventies, these murals are reminders of the struggles for progress and of Chicano people's commitment to bring about social change. They speak of a time when ideals of peace and love, bell bottoms, cultural pride, and anti-war sentiment reigned supreme throughout this country and campus. For others now active in the eighties and (hopefully) nineties, the murals serve as milestones of change and reminders of the Chicano cultural heritage.

These murals are social/cultural conscious messages. Many times they lack the aesthetic refinement or subtlety that many of us believe art should have. Some of these murals are what Chicanos call "rascuache art" (unrefined or unsophisticated art) - but to that extent they should be seen in the same light that entities such as El Teatro Campesino, which started as a rascuache theater company and ended up with Emmys, Obies, Hollywood films, a Broadway play, and a presidential citation. These artists are the kind of people whose first priority was to express their political convictions, before aesthetic quality. Indeed, at Casa Zapata recognition should be given to the high quality of some of the murals as well as to their artists. For example, Rudy Fernandez, a nationally known artist, painted a beautiful mural about his personal loves on the wall to Zapata's basement. Similarly, Zarco Guerrero is someone who has succeeded beyond the realms of Chicano Art to become a very widely accepted and popular artist. Other well known Chicano artists such as Juana Alicia, Rey Patlán, and Tony Burciaga have helped students create there own murals. Our most recent one is the breezeway mural directed by Ray Patlán which resulted from a SWOPSI mural course offered spring quarter, 1990. Respect for what Zapata's murals stand for has been the main reason they have never been painted over.

Of course, while respect for these murals should continue, consideration for the convictions of those that live amongst these murals should also be given. Today we live in a different world than that of 15 or 18 years ago. The Casa Zapata familia has accommodated these changes with even more murals (17+ as of now), constantly reflecting the evolution of the community. And there are alternatives in which to address these murals that can be proposed to the Casa Zapata community through community dialogue.

Our murals have a life and history of their own. We think it's important to preserve them. At the same time, we need to create new murals, like Tony's recent mural, "Chicano Heroes Last Supper," so that we too express our colors, dreams, goals, and realities, and leave our own record of the times.

5

Image 23: An introduction to the Casa Zapata murals in the 1990-91 *Zapatista*

In their writing, Burciaga and Lunca acknowledged the complex reactions visitors and new residents might have upon encountering the murals, stating that it "may be one of pride, surprise, and/or indignation" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, 1990-91 *Zapatista* "The Casa Zapata Murals", para. 1). They go on to describe the importance of continuously adapting the murals

to reflect the evolving experiences of the Casa Zapata community. They wrote,

> *...while respect for these murals should continue, consideration for the convictions of those that live amongst these murals should be given. Today we live in a different world than that of 15 or 18 years ago. The Casa Zapata familia has accommodated these changes with even more murals (17+ as of now), constantly reflecting the evolution of the community. And there are alternatives in which to address these murals that can be proposed to the Casa Zapata community through community dialogue...*
>
> (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, 1990-91 Zapatista "The Casa Zapata Murals", para. 5, italics added).

Burciaga and Luna believed the murals should not be seen as static pieces of art, but rather as living record's of the community's history and aspirations. They explain how, "Our murals have a life and history of their own. We think it's important to preserve them. At the same time, we need to create new murals...so that we too express our colors, dreams, goals, and realities, and leave our own record of the times" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, 1990-91 *Zapatista* "The Casa Zapata Murals", para. 6). It's through this openness to evolution that the mural's would remain relevant and reflective of the community.

LELAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY
ORGANIZED 1891
The 1993-94 Residents of Casa Zapata
Hereby Name Our Lounge
THE BURCIAGA LOUNGE
Honoring The Service of
Jose Antonio and Cecilia Burciaga

Image 24: Plaque honoring Antonio and Cecilia Burciaga, located in the Zapata Library (2024)

However, recent years have shifted towards more of a preservationist perspective on the murals, likely influenced by the University's ban on the addition of any new murals without permission, a decision which I think has been more harmful and divisive, alienating new students with identities that are not reflected in the walls of the dorm.

Antonio Burciaga's legacy in the dorm was so impactful that the 1993-94 residents of Casa Zapata named the dorm's lounge in honor of him and his wife, Cecilia. However, over time, this dedication has been somewhat forgotten, as the space is now commonly referred to simply as the "Zapata lounge."

The First Muralist

According to a newspaper clipping titled "Tattooed with murals", the first mural at Casa Zapata was painted by Zarco Guerrero in 1972, who went on to become "an artist of international renown" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, "Tattooed with murals", para. 21). In a write up based on his 1985 interview with Zarco Guerrero, Alonso Duenas describes how Guerrero initially could not recall the murals he had painted. However, when informed about two murals attributed to him — *A Reaction to the Violence of Media Racism*, in Stern dining hall (refer to the Casa Zapata Mural History Project website for more information on this mural) and *Zapata and Villa* in the main Zapata stairwell — Guerrero confirmed that he had actually created them in 1973.

Guerrero explained that he had applied and been accepted for a six-month term as an Artist-in-Residence (AIR) at Casa Zapata, during which he painted the murals. Today, the role of AIR is held by a dorm resident, typically a preassignee—a student who applies to live in Zapata after their freshman year—who applies with a specific artistic goal or vision for the upcoming academic year.

Tattooed with murals

Casa Zapata offers blessing to latest artwork

Image 25: "Tattooed with murals"

Reflecting on his work. Guerrero mentioned that he constantly thought about whether the murals were still "appropriate to today's students" ("Zarco Guerrero. An Interview" 1985, 1). He believed that "murals should be constantly changing to keep up with times and so that they do not lose their significance to people" ("Zarco Guerrero. An Interview" 1985, 2).

One of the murals attributed to Guerrero, *Zapata and Villa*, depicts Mexican revolutionaries Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa and is located in the main stairwell between the second and third floors of Casa Zapata. Duenas describes Guerrero's response when asked about his depiction of two figures, explaining, "When I asked him what the reason for making all of Villa's features take a downward slope, whereas Zapata's features all pointed up, he said that this was just one way to show that the two men were very different from each other, even though they were both revolutionaries and great leaders of men. Even though they were both fighting for the same cause, from the same raza, an[d] from the same era, they had very different ideas about the revolution and the future of Mexico, and this was what Zarco was trying to show" ("Zarco Guerrero. An Interview" 1985, 2).

The mural today:

Image 26: *Zapata and Villa* mural (2024)

Murals Over Time

Lotería Cards

A mural of Lotería cards, located on the outer wall of Casa Zapata's lounge and facing the shared courtyard with Burbank Hall, has undergone an important change in recent years. One particular card in the mural brings up an important conversation about issues of representation in the Zapata murals, especially as it relates to Latinx residents who are not Mexican or Mexican American.

Image 27: Lotería mural (date unknown)

The card in question—number 19, labeled “Centro América” and positioned near the center of the mural, to the right of the “PEACE” card featuring a dove—depicted a member of a death squad, referencing the paramilitary groups that operated in Central America during the civil wars of the late 20th century. These death squads were “trained, funded, and equipped by the United States” (Fernández 2021, para. 2), part of a broader strategy to protect U.S. interests in the regions. A skull was painted over the death squad member, though it’s unclear whether the skull was originally part of the mural in this way, or added later. Regardless, this card has been criticized by residents for reducing Central American representation in the dorm, already limited as it was, to depictions of war and death.

This specific loteria card has since been painted over—following in Burciaga’s own wishes that the murals would grow to reflect the community at Zapata — which is now one that demands more than narratives of war and death to represent an entire region. To me, this exemplifies the importance of understanding mural’s as evolving pieces of art that are meant

to change and respond to the values and needs of the communities they represent.

Estatues of Liberty

Another mural I encountered during my research is located on the outer wall of Casa Zapata's lounge, on the side facing Sally Ride House. While it still exists today, I could not find much information about its history or the reasons behind its creation.

During my exploration of the Casa Zapata archives, however, I came across the original image that inspired the mural. The image depicts two Amal militiamen in Beirut, Lebanon, and in the upper-right corner, a note written in pencil reads: "Source for second mural in series Estatues of Liberty c. 1990." I was unable to find more information about why students chose to add this image as a mural to Zapata.

I believe its inclusion reflects the connections that the dorm's residents and the mural's creators saw between their own experiences and liberation struggles around the world. The title *Estatues of Liberty* is likely a play on the Statue of Liberty—meant to symbolize "opportunity and freedom from oppression" (National Park Service n.d., para. 5)—but for many marginalized communities, it stands as an empty promise, overshadowed by the deeply rooted systemic injustices of the United States.

Images 28 and 29: *Estatues of Liberty* inspiration (left) and the mural today (2024)

The guns held by the militiamen in the original image, while originally depicted in the mural, have since been replaced with flowers, censored by the University.

Sueños y Esperanza

One of the murals in the Casa Zapata lounge looks noticeably different from its current version. An earlier version of this mural can be found on the "Casa Zapata" page of the Latina/o/x @ Stanford website, where it is signed as the *Casa Zapata 2003 Mural Project*. This version of the mural features a black background and a series of figures.

At the center of the 2003 version of the mural is a woman and a young girl, perhaps a mother and daughter. The young girl leans against the woman, whose eyes are closed, with only the top halves of their bodies visible. Below them, a man is depicted lying in a grassy field holding a soccer ball, with a young boy resting on his back. In the upper left corner, a woman and a man are painted holding each other in what appears to be a farewell; the man wears a U.S. Navy uniform while a young girl, possibly their daughter, hugs his legs. At the bottom left, four children are shown playing jump rope: two hold the rope while the other two are shown mid-jump.

The bottom center of the mural features a woman dressed in what appears to be traditional Mexican clothing, complete with a brightly colored dress and red flowers pinned into her hair, which is styled in a bun. In the upper right, a young man in a cap and gown is depicted wearing a multicolored graduation cord and a flower garland made of red and yellow flowers. Standing on either side of him are two figures implied to be his parents. At the center right, a man and a woman are shown crossing a river, partially undressed, with the man carrying a bundle of clothes in his left hand. Finally, at the bottom right, two women are seated next to each other, leaning close. One holds a young child, while the other cradles an infant. This may be implied to be a Lesbian couple.

What stands out in reflecting on this mural is how it chooses to represent Latinidad. For me, I noticed immediately that the 2003 version primarily depicts people who are white or have a lighter complexion. The exceptions include the man in military uniform, the couple crossing the river, the son graduating, and one of the women in the bottom right—the only Black figure in the mural.

The concept of Latinidad is one that attempts to homogenize multiple regions, identities, languages, and life experiences under one broad umbrella. As Dominican-American writer, Amanda Alcántara, puts it: “What happens when you subscribe to the idea of a single Latinidad narrative is you create a monolith—culturally and politically—of an entire continent when every single country and every single community has their own history” (Salazar 2019, para. 8). Latinidad serves to uplift a certain perception of what it means to be Latinx—homogeneously “brown,” Spanish-speaking, non-Caribbean—and often confuses ethnicity and race when used in everyday conversations. Afro-Zapotec scholar, poet, and writer, Alan Pelaez Lopez, argues that, “This identity is rooted in land and geography when it should be rooted in understanding settler colonialism in the Americas. I would be invested in a political Latinidad that first and foremost fought for indigenous sovereignty and black liberation” (Salazar 2019, para. 11). I can't say for sure whether these tensions in Latinidad and how it's represented were the reason that the mural was changed in 2013, but I wouldn’t be surprised if that was part of that conversation.

Image 30: *Sueños y Esperanza* mural (2024)

The mural in the lounge underwent a significant transformation in 2013 and now bears the title *Sueños y Esperanza*. While the central figures—the woman and young girl, as well as the man and young boy—remain largely unchanged, the background has been reimagined with new environments and new depictions of different people and events.

In the upper left, hills frame the outline of a city, where helicopters circle the silhouette of high-rise buildings. From this urban backdrop emerges a crowd of protesters, led by a young woman. The protesters hold signs with messages such as “Sí Se Puede” and “No H8,” alongside symbolic images like a raised fist and the Statue of Liberty. Below this scene, a queer family is depicted—a portrayal of two men dressed in suits, each holding a young girl in matching pink dresses.

In the bottom left, an elderly woman is shown sharing a book of photographs with a group of young children. She holds a piece of pink fabric in her left hand, which weaves its way through various parts of the mural. Photographs float out from the book across the bottom of the mural.

On the bottom right, a depiction of the U.S.-Mexico border emerges. To the left of the border, a small community appears, likely representing a border town. This scene transitions into the upper right, where the setting becomes a desert-like environment filled with canyons. One canyon is painted to resemble the faces of border patrol officers, while another canyon on the opposite side of the river takes the form of a woman. She extends one hand, palm outward to hinder the view of the officers, while her other hand reaches out to guide a man, woman, and young child along a safer path.

A helpful addition to this archive in the future could be a deeper dive into this mural and its changes, contacting those who were involved with its transformation or otherwise were present during that time to understand their thoughts behind the transformation.

The Spirit of Hoover Tower

Art

Making murals

Artist finds himself again in controversy

Image 31: "Making murals: Artist finds himself again in controversy"

In the archives, I came across a newspaper clipping from the *San Jose Mercury News*, published on June 2, 1989, titled, “Making murals: Artist finds himself again in controversy.” This document offers insights into the controversies surrounding some of Casa Zapata’s murals, and the thoughts of the main artist associated with this controversy, Tony Burciaga. The article highlights one controversy sparked in 1985, where students of a mural class taught by Burciaga painted a mural on the third floor of Casa Zapata, drawing inspiration from Día de los Muertos imagery to critique the legacy of Herbert Hoover—former President, Stanford alumnus, and founder of the conservative Hoover Institution of War, Revolution and Peace” (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, “Making murals” 1989, para. 7). The mural, called *The Spirit of Hoover*,

became controversial due to its bold political message and symbolism.

Further details about the mural came up in a 2022 *Stanford Daily* article, which was pulled from a lecture by past Casa Zapata Resident Fellow, Gina Hernandez-Clarke. Hernandez-Clarke described how the mural was created to "spark a conversation around 'the student lack of engagement on issues on campus and beyond.'" (Sanchez Martinez 2022, "Gina Hernandez-Clarke Explains Murals," para. 3). The murals three panels tackled key political issues of the time:

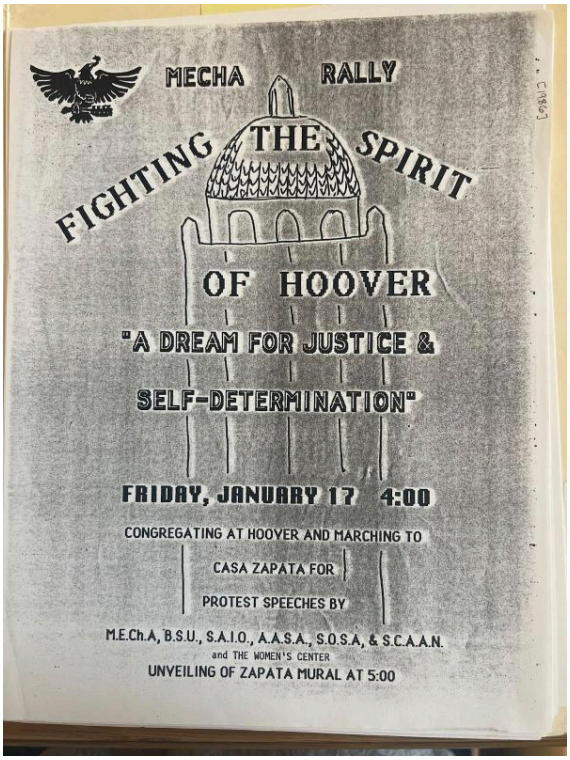


Image 32: Flyer announcing the unveiling of *The Spirit of Hoover*

"The left panel of the mural alludes to efforts by student activists to get Stanford to divest from apartheid... At the bottom of the panel, a piggy bank with the Stanford logo is shown receiving coins from the interaction between the officer and protester...Hernandez-Clarke explained that the evocative skeleton in the middle of the mural is meant to serve as a symbol to encourage students to see themselves in the social movements happening on campus. The overall objective of the mural, according to Hernandez-Clarke, was to spark conversations beyond the dorm about the issues the students were concerned about...In the right panel, the Statue of Liberty, with her torch dropped on the ground, holds an unbalanced scale with a woman and a child weighing less than an illustration of food products. According to Hernandez-Clarke, this alludes to the United States' political interventions that allowed companies like the United Fruit Company to exploit Latin American countries"

(Sanchez Martinez 2022, “Gina Hernandez-Clarke Explains Murals,” para. 4-6, italics added).

Hernandez-Clarke emphasized that the mural’s power lay not just in its imagery but in students’ involvement in the creation and unveiling of it. Recalling the mural’s unveiling at the steps of Hoover Tower, she described how, “murals have the ‘power to share history’ because they ‘express ideas vividly and allow students to speak up.’” (Sanchez Martinez 2022, “Gina Hernandez-Clarke Explains Murals,” para. 7). She also framed murals as sites of public memory.

Image 33: *The Spirit of Hoover* (2024) - has been moved from the third floor to the first floor of Zapata

Images 34-38: A more detailed look at the mural (2024)

Chicano Caricatures

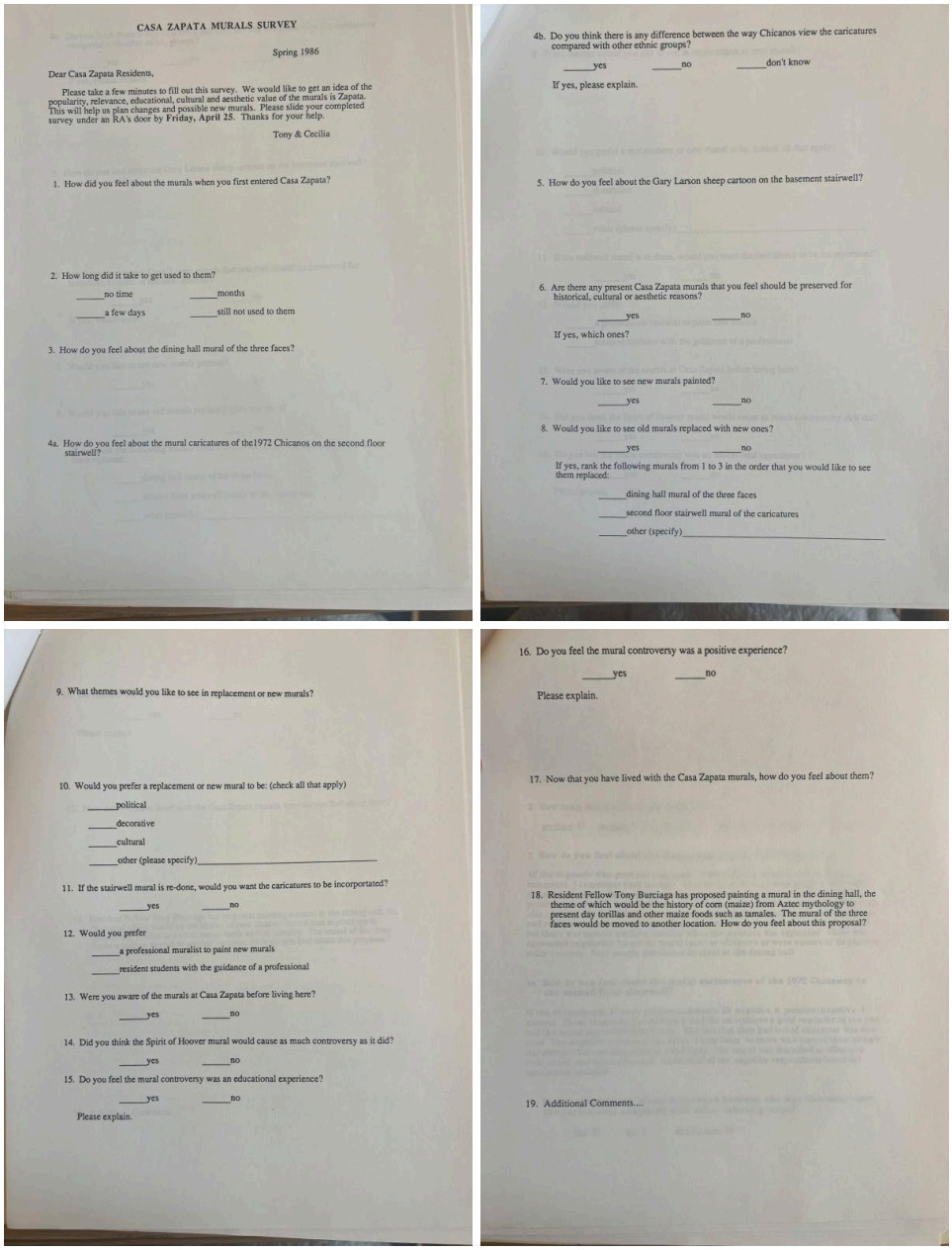
Image 39: Chicano caricatures (2024)

Similar to *The Spirit of Hoover*, the caricature of 1970s Chicanos, located on the second floor of the main stairwell, became a source of controversy for the dorm. In a tour of the Zapata murals, Antonio Burciaga explained that the controversiality came about in the 1980s and into the 90s as new students arrived at the dorm and would struggle to connect with the Chicanx aesthetics of the 1970s depicted in the mural. Reflecting on this disconnect, Burciaga explained, "What I tried to do in the past is remind the students that it was students dressed like these caricatures here that opened up the doors to Stanford, that created Casa Zapata" (Burciaga 2024, 20:14).

He goes on to note that the caricatures actually used to have speech bubbles, before the walls were repainted in 1992. The figure on the far left crouching down and holding a joint in his left hand was saying "Arriba, adelante, juntos, forward… Together we will overcome" (Burciaga 2024, 20:43). Above the caricature of the child, there was a speech balloon that said "We have the power" (Burciaga 2024, 21:15). He goes on to point out that the caricature of the women never had a speech bubble, a fact which came up in discussions about re-adding the speech bubbles and giving one to the woman (Burciaga 2024, 21:20). Although the speech bubbles, as of 2024, have not been added back to the mural, and the artwork has otherwise remained the same.

The mural was further examined through a student survey conducted in Spring 1986 by Antonio and Cecilia Burciaga. The survey was distributed to "get an idea of the popularity, relevance, educational, cultural and aesthetic value of the murals [at] Zapata" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, "Casa Zapata

Murals Survey"), and plan for potential future changes or additions to the murals.



CASA ZAPATA MURALS SURVEY

Spring 1986

Dear Casa Zapata Residents,

Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey. We would like to get an idea of the popularity, relevance, educational, cultural and aesthetic value of the murals is Zapata. This will help us plan changes and possible new murals. Please slide your completed survey under an RA's door by **Friday, April 25**. Thanks for your help.

Tony & Cecilia

1. How did you feel about the murals when you first entered Casa Zapata?

2. How long did it take to get used to them?
_____no time _____months
_____a few days _____still not used to them

3. How do you feel about the dining hall mural of the three faces?

4a. How do you feel about the mural caricatures of the1972 Chicanos on the second floor stairwell?

4b. Do you think there is any difference between the way Chicanos view the caricatures compared with other ethnic groups?
_____yes _____no _____don't know
If yes, please explain.

5. How do you feel about the Gary Larson sheep cartoon on the basement stairwell?

6. Are there any present Casa Zapata murals that you feel should be preserved for historical, cultural or aesthetic reasons?
_____yes _____no
If yes, which ones?

7. Would you like to see new murals painted?
_____yes _____no

8. Would you like to see old murals replaced with new ones?
_____yes _____no
If yes, rank the following murals from 1 to 3 in the order that you would like to see them replaced:
_____dining hall mural of the three faces
_____second floor stairwell mural of the caricatures
_____other (specify)_____

9. What themes would you like to see in replacement or new murals?

10. Would you prefer a replacement or new mural to be: (check all that apply)
_____political
_____decorative
_____cultural
_____other (please specify)_____

11. If the stairwell mural is re-done, would you want the caricatures to be incorportated?
_____yes _____no

12. Would you prefer
_____a professional muralist to paint new murals
_____resident students with the guidance of a professional

13. Were you aware of the murals at Casa Zapata before living here?
_____yes _____no

14. Did you think the Spirit of Hoover mural would cause as much controversy as it did?
_____yes _____no

15. Do you feel the mural controversy was an educational experience?
_____yes _____no
Please explain.

16. Do you feel the mural controversy was a positive experience?
_____yes _____no
Please explain.

17. Now that you have lived with the Casa Zapata murals, how do you feel about them?

18. Resident Fellow Tony Burciaga has proposed painting a mural in the dining hall, the theme of which would be the history of corn (maize) from Aztec mythology to present day torillas and other maize foods such as tamales. The mural of the three faces would be moved to another location. How do you feel about this proposal?

19. Additional Comments....

Images 40-43: "Casa Zapata Murals Survey" blank copy

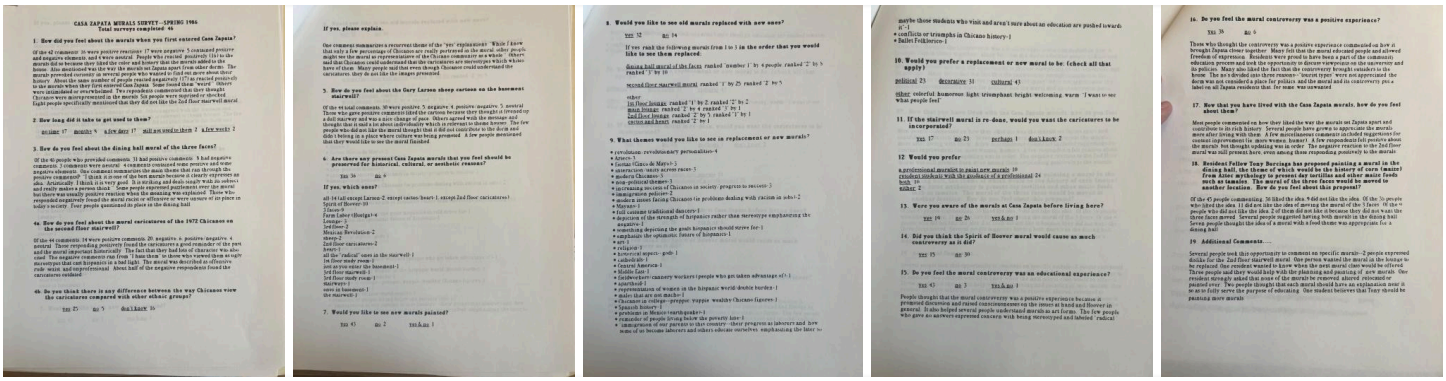
Questions included:

- "1. How did you feel about the murals when you first entered Casa Zapata?"
- "4a. How do you feel about the mural caricatures of the 1972 Chicanos on the second floor stairwell?"

- “4b. Do you think there is any difference between the way Chicanos view the caricatures compared with other ethnic groups?”
- “8. Would you like to see old murals replaced with new ones?”
- “16. Do you feel the mural controversy was a positive experience?”

The survey also requested feedback on a few specific murals in the dorm, including *A Reaction to the Violence of Media Racism* in the dining hall and *The Spirit of Hoover*.

The responses revealed a range of opinions. Of the 46 surveys that were returned, 25 students ranked the mural of Chicano caricatures as the one they most wanted to see replaced with a new mural, while 14 students voted for all the murals to be preserved. *The Spirit of Hoover* received the most support for preservation, with 10 votes. It’s especially interesting to see the themes that students hoped to see represented in future murals. One student asked for a mural on Central America, another student requested one on the Middle East, and yet another wanted one to serve as a “reminder of people living below the poverty line” (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, “Casa Zapata Murals Survey” 1986). These responses appear to reflect conversations about representation in the Zapata murals and further give credence to the philosophy of artist Zarco Guerrero, who believed that “art should stimulate a reaction from the viewer… The most boring art is that which is just there” (“Zarco Guerrero. An Interview” 1985, 3).



Images 44-48: Summary of the responses to the "Casa Zapata Murals Survey", by question:

The Future of Murals at Zapata

The University has stopped allowing new murals to be painted without undergoing an application process for approval. How, then, do we navigate improving representations in murals — the first thing students see when they enter the dorm for the first time and undeniably the dorm's most defining characteristic — to better reflect the community of Zapata today, one much more diverse than the primarily Mexican and Mexican American histories, activism, and aesthetics ("Casa Zapata Murals" 1994) represented in the murals.

Based on current attempts at Zapata this year, adding a new, temporary mural installation would be a year-long effort, at minimum.

◆ ◆

THE COMMUNITY

Many of the documents I encountered in the archives from the later 1980s and through the 90s referred to Zapata residents and in general those who were a part of the dorm's community as "Zapatistas", an interesting point of comparison to today where "Zapamigos" is the more common title used to refer to the dorm community. Beyond these, "Zapamores," "Zapafamilia" and similar play-on words have been used by dorm residents, student leaders, and the current RF family.

Residents and "Fourth Floorers"

I want to briefly explore social constructions and identity formation in relation to the dorm, specifically through the identities of house residents and "Fourth Floorers."

"Fourth Floor" is a distinctive identity within the Zapata community, referring to individuals who do not live, or don't have an official assigned room, in the dorm, but are actively considered a part of the dorm community. They live on the nonexistent "fourth floor" of Zapata. They often form close bonds with multiple residents and spend considerable time in the dorm. This sort of identity is not unique to Zapata; other dorm communities have similar terms for members of their community. Ujamaa has its own version in the "C-wingers." The dorm has an A-wing and a B-wing, but those who are deeply involved in the community but may not have a physical room in the dorm live in the imaginary "C-wing."

Fourth Floorers are known to participate in dorm trips and attend events such as Tacos Tumbados, a quarterly "residents only" community-building celebration held by the RFs, which, despite being advertised as "residents only" in Fall quarter, welcomed many Fourth Floorers.

The difference between a resident and a Fourth Floor is intentionally blurred, as both are deeply involved in the dorm's activities. Differentiation typically relies on personal knowledge about an individual's living situation or their own self-identification. Many individuals take pride in identifying as Fourth Floorers, and this identity can often become a pathway for officially living or staffing in the dorm in the future. Some intentionally chose to be a Fourth Floor as a way of experimenting with living in other parts of campus while maintaining their connection to the community at Zapata.

Student Leaders

The two key student staff, or "leadership," positions in Casa Zapata are Resident Assistants (RAs) and Ethnic-Theme Associates (ETAs), each with their own unique but complimentary responsibilities.

RAs are taken with amazing the everyday operations of the dorm. Their responsibilities include leading weekly house meetings, planning dorm trips, and addressing the daily needs of residents, ETAs, meanwhile, focus on the cultural programming of the dorm. They coordinate the dorm's weekly cultural programming, known today as "Zaplaticas," and organize additional quarterly cultural events based on the interests of the dorm. One of their biggest responsibilities is planning Flor y Canto, Zapata's yearly big-ticket event, a talent show put on during Family Weekend in Winter quarter.

Both RAs and ETAs work with residents to co-build a dorm that prioritizes community, learning, radical care, and resistance.

The *Zapatista* presents an example of how student leaders historically tried to build a connection with residents. In "The Residential Staff" section of the booklet, the student leaders for that academic year would introduce themselves through personalized entries. These entries combined art, poems, and other creative mediums to highlight the unique interests and personalities of each student leader.

One entry that stands out from the 1990-91 *Zapatista* is an introductory poem, written to the tune of "My Favorite Things," from The Sound of Music:

"*Dancing and writing and chatting with buddies,*

Casa Zapata and Chicano Studies,

Daffodils blooming and golden pearl rings,

These are a few of my favorite things.

When you're happy,

Come and cheer me,

When you're feeling sad,

Just come up and visit,

Well talk for a while,

And then you won't feel so bad."

Other introductions from this year include self-portraits, hand-written notes, and even a screenplay/script.

Theme Associates (TAs) & Ethnic-Theme Associates (ETAs)

While Theme Associates (TAs) no longer exist, archival materials from the late 1980s and 1990s, including various issues of the *Zapatista*, highlight their presence in Zapata during that time. Many of the documents I explored in the archive referenced the TAs as specific to theme houses, with one referring to the "TAs from the four theme houses," a clear reference to Zapata, Ujamaa, Muwekma, and Okada. Evidence from the archives suggests that the TA role served as a precursor to the Ethnic-Theme Associate (ETA) role that exists today, though this connection is implied rather than explicitly documented.

The 1990-91 *Zapatista* details a student staff roster that included four RAs and six TAs: two TAs on the first floor, three on the second floor, and one on the third floor. This contrasts sharply with the current distribution of student leader positions, which includes six RAS (two per floor) and only three ETAs (one per floor). This reduction from six TAs to three ETAs limits the identities that can be represented within the ETA

team, a team tasked with leading the cultural (identity-based) programming for the dorm.

This shift underscores the importance today for the ETA team to continue intentionally elevating marginalized identities within the Latinx community. This responsibility is highlighted in the Casa Zapata Mission Statement, which was created by the 2023-2024 ETA team and updated by the current 2024-2025 ETA team. The mission statement centered on key goals for the dorm and its programming, such as prioritizing AfroLatine voices, elevating Indigenous sovereignty, and centering queer & transgender freedom, culminating in the broader objective of (re)imagining Latinidad. As outlined in the mission, the ETA team strives to interrogate oppressive systems within Latinidad while expanding and reimagining what this identity can mean:

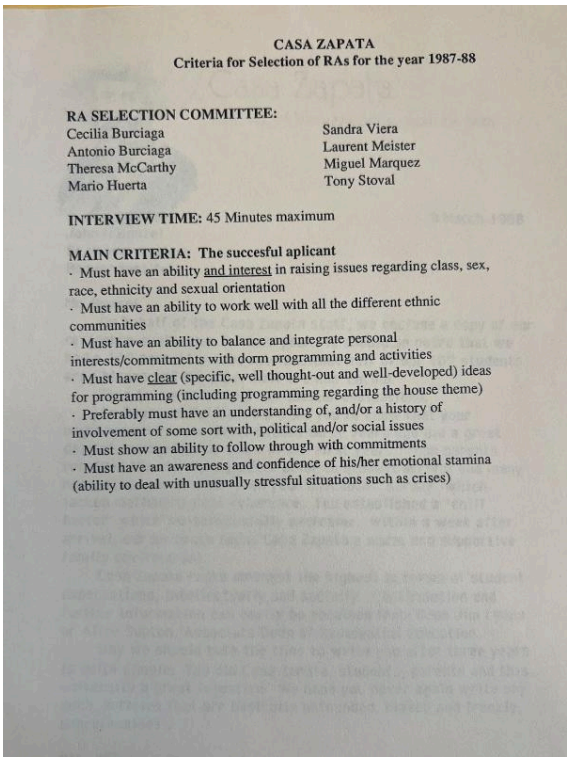
> *While we are dedicated to interrogating oppressive systems of power normalized within Latinidad, we hope to expand our understanding of it, past just what has been historically wrong to (re)imagine what identity we want to forge. ETA spaces will explore the Latinx identity and its formation, embarking us on a transformative journey toward rediscovery and reclamation. We recognize the need to challenge long-held narratives in Latinidad to create space for a more authentic and inclusive articulation of what it means to be Latine. However, this work can and is difficult but it shouldn't just be so. In sustainably crafting a better future for our community, we hope to embrace the joy in honoring our past, celebrating our present, and imagining our future.*

(@zapamigos 2024, italics added).

Student Staff Selections (1980s)

According to hiring documents from the archives, the selection process for Resident Assistants (RAs) at Casa Zapata in 1987-1988 emphasized both practical abilities and ideological alignment with the dorm's mission.

Candidates were expected to demonstrate "an ability and interest in raising issues regarding class, sex, race, ethnicity and



CASA ZAPATA
Criteria for Selection of RAs for the year 1987-88

RA SELECTION COMMITTEE:
Cecilia Burciaga
Antonio Burciaga
Theresa McCarthy
Mario Huerta
Sandra Viera
Laurent Meister
Miguel Marquez
Tony Stoval

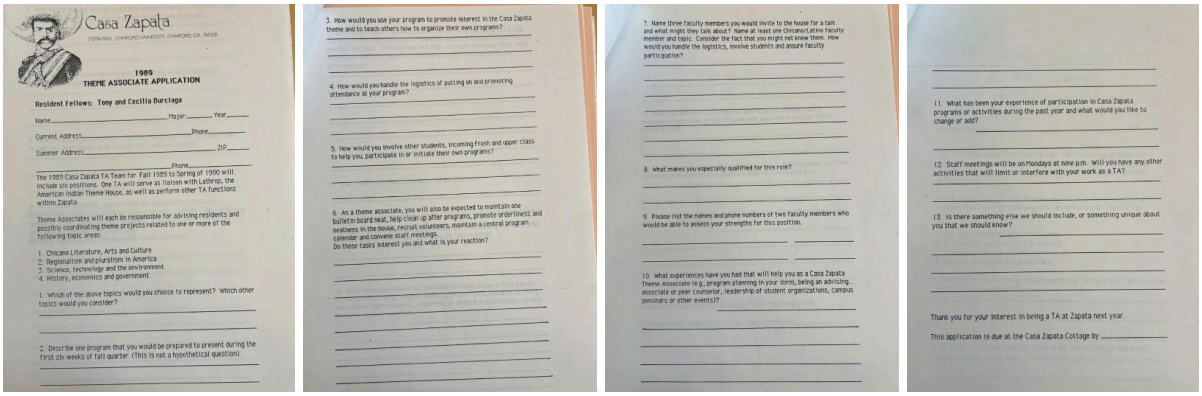
INTERVIEW TIME: 45 Minutes maximum

MAIN CRITERIA: The succesful aplicant
· Must have an ability and interest in raising issues regarding class, sex, race, ethnicity and sexual orientation
· Must have an ability to work well with all the different ethnic communities
· Must have an ability to balance and integrate personal interests/commitments with dorm programming and activities
· Must have clear (specific, well thought-out and well-developed) ideas for programming (including programming regarding the house theme)
· Preferably must have an understanding of, and/or a history of involvement of some sort with, political and/or social issues
· Must show an ability to follow through with commitments
· Must have an awareness and confidence of his/her emotional stamina (ability to deal with unusually stressful situations such as crises)

Image 49: Criteria for Selection of RAs 1987-88

sexual orientation" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, Criteria for Selection of RAs 1987-88)—an explicitly political requirement. Additionally, applicants were expected to "have an ability to work well with all the different ethnic communities" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, Criteria for Selection of RAs 1987-88) and balance their personal commitments with active participation in dorm programming. Interestingly, the criteria for selection included a preference for candidates with "an understanding of, and/or a history of involvement of some sort with, political and/or social issues" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, Criteria for Selection of RAs 1987-88), reinforcing the idea that leaders in Casa Zapata should actively engage with broader societal dynamics. Other criteria included emotional stamina to handle crises and the ability to follow through on commitments.

There was a relatively large RA selection committee—eight members in total, including RFs at the time, Cecilia and Antonio Burciaga—compared with today, when the decision lies on the rankings of RFs and the applicants themselves. Another interesting thing to note is that these expectations for RA candidates overlap in many ways with the responsibilities of ETAs as they exist now. It makes sense then that RAs and ETAs work so closely together today.


Casa Zapata

1989
THEME ASSOCIATE APPLICATION

Resident Fellows: Tony and Cecilia Durciaga

Name_____ Major_____ Year_____

Current Address_____ Phone_____

Summer Address_____ Zip_____

Phone_____

The 1989 Casa Zapata TA Team for Fall 1989 to Spring of 1990 will include six positions. One TA will serve as liaison with Latinos, the American Indian Theme House, as well as perform other TA functions within Zapata.

Theme Associates will each be responsible for advising residents and possibly coordinating theme projects related to one or more of the following topic areas:

1. Chicano Literature, Arts and Culture
2. Regionalism and pluralism in America
3. Science, technology and the environment
4. History, economics and government

1. Which of the above topics would you choose to represent? Which other topics would you consider?

2. Describe one program that you would be prepared to present during the first six weeks of fall quarter. (This is not a hypothetical question).

3. How would you use your program to promote interest in the Casa Zapata theme and to teach others how to organize their own programs?

4. How would you handle the logistics of putting on and promoting attendance at your program?

5. How would you involve other students, incoming Frosh and upper class to help you, participate in or initiate their own programs?

6. As a theme associate, you will also be expected to maintain one bulletin board/wall, help clean up after programs, promote orderliness and neatness in the house, recruit volunteers, maintain a central program calendar and convene staff meetings.
Do these tasks interest you and what is your reaction?

7. Name three faculty members you would invite to the house for a talk and what might they talk about? Name at least one Chicano/Latino faculty member and topic. Consider the fact that you might not know them. How would you handle the logistics, involve students and assure faculty participation?

8. What makes you especially qualified for this role?

9. Please list the names and phone numbers of two faculty members who would be able to assess your strengths for this position.

10. What experiences have you had that will help you as a Casa Zapata Theme Associate (e.g., program planning in your dorm, being an advising associate or peer counselor, leadership of student organizations, campus seminars or other events)?

11. What has been your experience of participation in Casa Zapata programs or activities during the past year and what would you like to change or add?

12. Staff meetings will be on Mondays at nine p.m. Will you have any other activities that will limit or interfere with your work as a TA?

13. Is there something else we should include, or something unique about you that we should know?

Thank you for your interest in being a TA at Zapata next year.

This application is due at the Casa Zapata Cottage by _____

Image 50-53: "1989 Theme Associate Application"

Theme Associates (TAs) have a somewhat ambiguous history with Casa Zapata. Archives suggest that TAs were not initially considered staff in the same way as Resident Assistants (RAs), or at the very least, residents were unclear about their purpose within the dorm. This confusion is reflected in responses to a student survey titled “About Casa Zapata,” designed to gather feedback on improving dorm life.

One question from the survey asked, “Are there any changes you would like to see in the staff’s role in the house?” Responses varied, with some students criticizing TAs for doing “jack shit,” while others expressed a desire to better understand the TAs’ role or simply get to know them better. Overall, the responses paint a picture of a role that, at the time, lacked clarity or consistency.

The 1989 Theme Associate application included a brief description of the TA role and its responsibilities:

“*Theme Associates will each be responsible for advising residents and possibly coordinating theme projects related to one or more of the following topic areas:*

1. Chicano Literature, Arts and Culture

2. Regionalism and pluralism in America

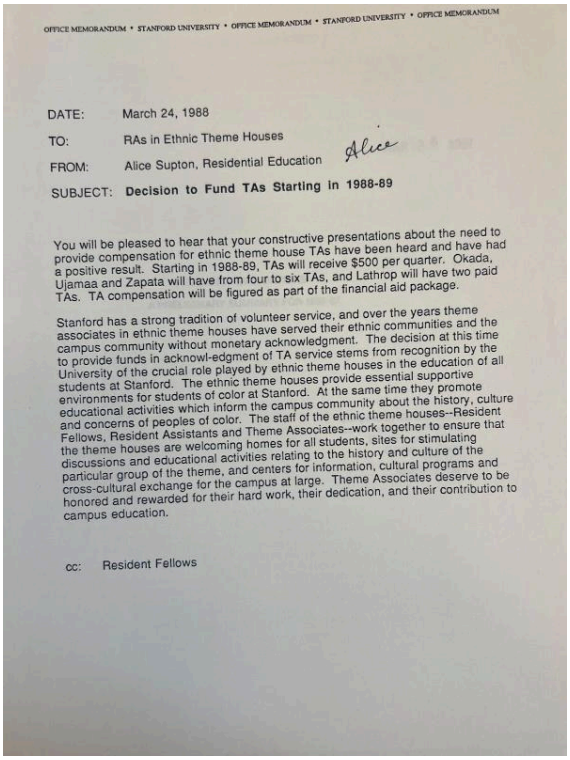
3. Science, technology and the environment

4. History, economics and government"

(Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, "1989 Theme Associate Application," italics added).

The application specified that the TA team would include six positions, with one TA being additionally tasked with serving as a liaison with "Lathrop" (now named Muwekma-Tah-Ruk), the Native/Indigenous ethnic-theme dorm.

Applicants for the TA position were asked questions about their capacity to contribute to dorm life. For example, they were required to describe a program they would present during the first six weeks of Fall Quarter—an expectation that parallels the current hope for pre assignees, particularly those living in Singles, to lead a Zaplática which centers on a topic connected to Latinidad or the resident's academic, social, political, or activist interests. Another question asked how applicants would engage other residents—both incoming frosh and upperclassmen—to co-create programming (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, "1989 Theme Associate Application").



OFFICE MEMORANDUM • STANFORD UNIVERSITY • OFFICE MEMORANDUM • STANFORD UNIVERSITY • OFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 24, 1988

TO: RAs in Ethnic Theme Houses

FROM: Alice Supton, Residential Education Alice

SUBJECT: **Decision to Fund TAs Starting in 1988-89**

You will be pleased to hear that your constructive presentations about the need to provide compensation for ethnic theme house TAs have been heard and have had a positive result. Starting in 1988-89, TAs will receive $500 per quarter. Okada, Ujamaa and Zapata will have from four to six TAs, and Lathrop will have two paid TAs. TA compensation will be figured as part of the financial aid package.

Stanford has a strong tradition of volunteer service, and over the years theme associates in ethnic theme houses have served their ethnic communities and the campus community without monetary acknowledgment. The decision at this time to provide funds in acknowl-edgment of TA service stems from recognition by the University of the crucial role played by ethnic theme houses in the education of all students at Stanford. The ethnic theme houses provide essential supportive environments for students of color at Stanford. At the same time they promote educational activities which inform the campus community about the history, culture and concerns of peoples of color. The staff of the ethnic theme houses--Resident Fellows, Resident Assistants and Theme Associates--work together to ensure that the theme houses are welcoming homes for all students, sites for stimulating discussions and educational activities relating to the history and culture of the particular group of the theme, and centers for information, cultural programs and cross-cultural exchange for the campus at large. Theme Associates deserve to be honored and rewarded for their hard work, their dedication, and their contribution to campus education.

cc: Resident Fellows

Image 54: "Decision to Fund TAs Starting in 1988-89"

The responsibilities outlined for TAs through the application questions included maintaining bulletin boards, cleaning up after programs, managing a central dorm calendar, and convening staff meetings. Similar to how the criteria for RAs in 1988 appeared to overlap with the expectations for ETAs, some of the expectations for TAs in 1989 also overlap with the responsibilities of the RAs today. Interestingly, TAs were not

funded until 1988, adding another layer of complexity to their position within the dorm's leadership structure.

Today, student leader applications for all Stanford housing are largely standardized, with specific house-related questions emerging only during the interview stage. This differs from the tailored and mission-driven nature of the TA application process in 1989.

Student Staff Training (1980s)

In the summer of 1988, Resident Assistants (RAs) and Theme Associates (TAs) received separate letters from the University outlining their training schedules and a curated set of readings selected by the Resident Fellows (RFs) and the Housing Office. These materials were meant to speak to issues that may come up in the dorm over the course of the academic year. While both letters discussed arrival dates and general training timelines, the content and framing of the letters highlighted differences in the expectations and focus for each role.

For TAs, the letter emphasized specialized preparation for their roles in ethnic theme houses:

> "*Your Resident Fellows and the central office have developed a special training program for TAs. Some sessions will be with RAs, and* ***some will be with TAs from the four theme houses. The TA sessions will give you helpful background to respond to issues that emerge in ethnic theme houses and to prepare you to plan and implement effective theme programs***"
>
> (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, Theme Associate Training Letter 1988, para. 2, bold & italics added).

The intentional separation of TA training from RA training suggests an acknowledgment of the distinct nature of ethnic-theme dorms and the specialized knowledge required to support their residents. Currently, there is only one allocated

training day for Ethnic-Theme Associates (ETAs) across all ethnic-theme dorms—Casa Zapata, Ujamaa, Muwekma, and Okada—to meet and prepare for their roles together. This limited interaction feels like a form of international isolation from the University, limiting the potential for collective organizing and solidarity building across the ethnic-theme dorms.

In contrast, the RA letter framed training as a broader introduction to Residential Education:

> "RA *Training is designed to enable you to get to know others on the residence staff and colleagues in Student Affairs and to discuss ways to put into practice the goals of Residential Education*"
>
> (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, Resident Assistant Training Letter 1988, italics added).

The RA training appeared more generalized, emphasizing community building among residents and alignment with the University's overarching Residential Education mission.

◆ ◆

INTENTIONAL SPACE BUILDING

In the Words of Student Leaders

In an interview published by the *Stanford Daily* on October 25, 2022, student leaders at Casa Zapata shared their perspectives on the dorm. Jennifer Martinez (RA, Class of 2023), Gema Quetzal (ETA, Class of 2023) and Hector Angel Rivera (ETA, Class of 2024) reflect on what makes the dorm special and the ongoing challenges of making it not only inclusive, but a space that actively deconstructs preconceived notions surrounding Latinidad.

This tension is not new to Zapata. For instance, notes from a speech introducing the dorm's theme for the 1993-1994 academic year, "Crossing Borders," acknowledged the challenges faced by students navigating the dorm's focus on Chicanx and Mexican American students:

"At Zapata – What we hope:

For Non-MexAm students – there may be some fear of feeling like one + only – feeling excluded – on basis of looks

For Mex students – an opp. to explore your own backgrounds – you will see differences…"

(Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, "Crossing Borders" speech, italics added).

I would like to note that this speech was during a time when 50% of the students at an ethnic-theme dorm needed to be not of that ethnicity (example: at Casa Zapata, it had to be 50% Latinx and 50% non-Latinx), so this speech may have been in reference to the non-Latinx residents of the dorm. However, in many ways, this sentiment also applies to all the non-Mexican or non-Chicanx students who have lived at the dorm and wished for their own identities to be equally represented, elevated, and cared for in the space. Something that today, when there no longer is that requirement to have 50% of the dorm residents not be Latinx and there is space for more diverse representations of Latin American students in the dorm, is a central consideration for the space we are building. How can we learn and grow the space to welcome everyone and call others in when they fall short of that goal.

Martinez shares that the process of bringing to question what it means to be Latinx is ultimately a community-led struggle at Zapata, stating,

> *"We're all so diverse. We all come from different communities and backgrounds, both racially and ethnically. There is so much to learn. We have programming every week and it allows for a safe space for you to grow and teach yourself. Just because you don't live in the house at the moment doesn't mean you can't contribute. We can make Zapata bigger somehow. We can always fight for that. All community members are always welcome here"*

(Sanchez Martinez 2022, "Q&A: Casa Zapata Staff Insights," para. 9, italics added)

Quetzal echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the expansive nature of the community and the role that each member plays in transforming the space:

> *"Our community is big. It goes beyond those who live here. It's a community that's about harboring our histories, creating a safe place that allows us to be ourselves, celebrating each other and stimulating change. You don't have to live here to be a part of it. You just have to be somebody who's willing to give to the community and also learn from the community."*

(Sanchez Martinez 2022, "Q&A: Casa Zapata Staff Insights," para. 20, italics added)

Each member of the community is expected to contribute to this effort to continuously co-create the space into one that feels welcoming and comfortable to everyone, little by little. Rivera sums up the incremental nature and collective effort of this process:

> *"There's something for everybody here. We welcome everybody. We hope that everybody will come join us. I know it's not perfect. But right now, it's what we have. It's best to work with what we have and make it better."*

(Sanchez Martinez 2022, "Q&A: Casa Zapata Staff Insights," para. 17, italics added)

These reflections encourage us to look beyond the hegemonizing project of Latinidad and the limits of what it means to be called the "Chicanx and Latinx ethnic theme dorm" (Sanchez Martinez 2022, "Q&A: Casa Zapata Staff Insights," para. 2). What does it mean to understand "Chicanx" as an important political identity for students in the 1970s, while also understanding critiques of the Chicano movement and the way it has historically romanticized and homogenized Indigeneity as a symbol of resistance while neglecting the ongoing struggles and contributions of contemporary Indigenous peoples (Lourdes 2016, 19). Further, what does it mean to be a student who doesn't identify within the category of Chicanx and is thus relegated to the secondary identity of the dorm, "Latinx," which itself further erases the existence of Indigenous and/or Black peoples from imagined representations of Latin America.

Weekly Theme Programming

An example of the intentional space-building aspect of Zapata, a collaboration between student leaders, residents, Fourth Floorers, and every member of the broader community, can be seen through the weekly programming of the dorm, coordinated by the Ethnic-Theme Associates (ETAs). Gema explains how, "Our job as ETA is to create programming to also unpack the issues in our community so we can create something better for all of our futures." (Sanchez Martinez 2022, "Q&A: Casa Zapata Staff Insights," para. 22).

★CASA ZAPATA★
MISSION STATEMENT
At Casa Zapata, our dedicated team of Ethnic Theme Associates (ETAs) are committed to honoring the unique and multiple Latinidades experienced by our residents. We understand community to be not simply something that happens, but rather, something we make in our everyday efforts. Through transformative, community-based dialogue, celebration, and respect for our varied cultural wisdoms, our mission is to advance learning as a liberatory tool in fashioning a future for our community. Such responsibility requires that we all recognize and engage in the difficult and ongoing work of sustaining anti-colonial and liberatory visions of our beings, our communities, and our futures.
PRIORITIZE AFROLATINE VOICES
Across Latin America, the birth and maintenance of many nations has come at the expense of Black diasporic communities who have experienced slavery, segregation, and violent racism still impacting our present conditions. Our commitments lie in not just the acknowledgment of anti-Blackness in Latine history, but in dismantling such logics present in Latinidad today; we understand a just and all-embracing community can only be achieved by challenging anti-Black sentiments at their core. This means not just challenging racism, but also making visible the ways Afro-Latinx culture and identity has pioneered what we define as Latinx culture. We aim to celebrate and honor the Black ingenuity behind what has been often whitewashed from reggaeton to revolution. In and outside of our home, we hold the importance of centering Afro-Latinx identity in the (re)imagination of Latinidad.
ELEVATE INDIGENOUS SOVERIGNTY
Casa Zapata sits on the ancestral and unceded homelands of the Muwekma Ohlone and as we situate ourselves as visitors/settlers, we seek to honor their continuous relationship to this land. Moreover, honoring the indigenous stewardship of our homelands is key to challenging ongoing colonial logics of Latinidad. This means uplifting the hundreds of Native identities present in Latin America whose unique traditions and communities thrive today. This also means supporting the struggle towards land sovereignty and return for all indigenous peoples. In and outside of our home, we hold the importance of centering Indigenous identity in the (re)imagination of Latinidad.
CENTER QUEER & TRANS FREEDOM
Present in our culture are the dangerous dynamics of machismo that perpetuate heternormative frameworks and patriarchal systems of power. We recognize this as a part of a colonial legacy that has historically limited the potential for gender marginalized peoples in our community to thrive. Today, gender marginalized peoples are often targets of cruel violence such as femicide, homophobia, and transphobia. We are committed to fostering a space where individuals of all genders can embrace healthy and authentic expressions of themselves and also, be completely safe to do so. This means working daily towards creating a culture of consent, sexual freedom, and feminist practice.
CHALLENGE CO-OPTATION
At Casa Zapata, we understand our relationship to the university and institutions at large as fugitive. We strive against the neoliberal co-optation of our homelands and our identity across the diaspora and by initiatives which often erase our diversity and aim to make us subject. We are against the continuous colonization and imperialist ventures of our homelands and diasporic communities. We position ourselves in solidarity with all oppressed people across the world.
TRANSFORMATIVE JUSTICE
Our Latine community have long been victims of overt criminalization and policing. As ETAs, we see value in the restorative and healing processes of transformative justice as means to rehabilitate harm. Implementing transformative justice in our community requires open communication and a commitment to the principles of accountability, empathy, and change. In doing this, we hope to build a nuanced space of communal healing, reciprocity, transparency, and most importantly, justice. We see abolition as a horizon we're working towards arriving on and within our community, we hope to see that light with you.
LEARNING AS LIBERATION
Learning is a liberatory tool that equalizes our community in beautiful ways. We believe healthy dialogue is powerful in realizing this and creating a harmonious community that champions joy, care, and culture. As we work to cultivate our home, we hope to constantly engage the powerful act of listening, sharing, and learning together. We reject learning as solely restricted to the classroom and embrace it wholly as a revolutionary act of being. In engaging education as a form of self and community actualization, we understand it as a practice of freedom.
(RE)IMAGINING. LATINIDAD
While we are dedicated to interrogating oppressive systems of power normalized within Latinidad, we hope to expand our understanding of it, past just what has been historically wrong to (re)imagine what identity we want to forge. ETA spaces will explore the Latinx identity and its formation, embarking us on a transformative journey toward rediscovery and reclamation. We recognize the need to challenge long-held narratives in Latinidad to create space for a more authentic and inclusive articulation of what it means to be Latine. However, this work can and is difficult but it shouldn't just be so. In sustainably crafting a better future for our community, we hope to embrace the joy in honoring our past, celebrating our present, and imagining our future.

Images 55-56: Casa Zapata Mission Statement 2024-2025

In the past two years, this weekly programming has further been reimagined into a new space. What was known as "ZapaMondays" just three years ago has now become "Zaplaticas," a space dedicated to community learning and dialogue. This shift was implemented by the 2023-2024 ETA team with the goal of elevating discussion in the weekly programming, centering conversation with Zaplatica attendees rather than the programming being primarily lecture-based. This also came with the creation of an official mission statement for the dorm, one that explicitly states the continuous effort to make the dorm more inclusive each year—a place of collective growth and learning.

Image 57: "Queer Dimensions" - Final Zaplatica of Fall Quarter 2024

As an example, I want to highlight the final Zaplatica from Fall Quarter 2024: **"Queer Dimensions."** This Zaplatica explored queer theory through the realms of time, space and sound, emphasizing an understanding of queerness as not only an identity, but a way of interaction with and understanding (or refusing to understand) the world around us. The programming was meant to center discussion, with three activities cutting through the presentation of queer theory.

The first activity, **“queering the timeline**,” built on the idea that queer people exist outside of chrononormativity—“the expectation that we all follow the same timeline, that there’s the same right thing at the right time for everybody” (“Chrononormativity” 2024, para. 1). In the context of a heteronormative society, this expectation would typically go as follows: birth, childhood, adolescence, college, marriage, children, retirement, death. The challenge of this activity was to think beyond that and try to “queer” the timeline of a person's life.

The next activity was **“queering the city**.” Building on the themes of the first activity, this one explored the way that queer people often create their own separate spaces in order to exist as their authentic selves. Many of these queer spaces, however, are confined to the night, aligning queerness with something hidden, existing only in darkness and away from sight.. This activity challenged students to (re)imagine a city through a queer lens, rejecting the heteronormative lens that isolates queer people as undesirable outsiders in public settings. Many students chose to remap Stanford.

Images 58-63: Examples of what people created from the first two activities

The final activity, **“queering the soundscape**,” took a slightly different approach. As a collective class, the goal was to create a

cacophony of noise, whatever they wanted to represent in the moment, to infuse the space with sound that could not be ignored, that said, “we’re here and queer.”

Student feedback after Zaplaticas has always been honest and insightful, offering a valuable glimpse into what participants appreciate and what they hope to learn more about in the future. At the end of each Zaplatica, a QR code linking to an “Exit Ticket” is displayed. This serves as both a way of collecting attendance and a platform for gathering feedback about the programming each week. Students can share what went well, suggest areas for improvement, and share any suggestions for future topics, food, or speakers.

Feedback from the Zaplatica on queerness included:

- “I loved how creative everyone was!!”
- “definitely one of my favorite zaplaticas!! [the presenter] did such a great job and i really appreciated how he tied in geology and science into it and it made so much sense”
- “I found the activity where we made the timeline the most interesting because it was very cool to see what each person thought and their ideas.”

As this doubled as the final Zaplatica of the quarter, we also collected feedback on students' experiences in the space over the last nine weeks as a whole. Responses included:

- “I liked how they got near the end, with more discussions and genuine lecture[s]”
- “I like the collaboration that occurs during the talks”
- “I like the diversity of the different ideas and topics that there were presented because I got to see many different presentations and ideas that I did not about before.”
- “I really liked the breakout groups we would have throughout the quarter as it allowed us to communicate our thoughts

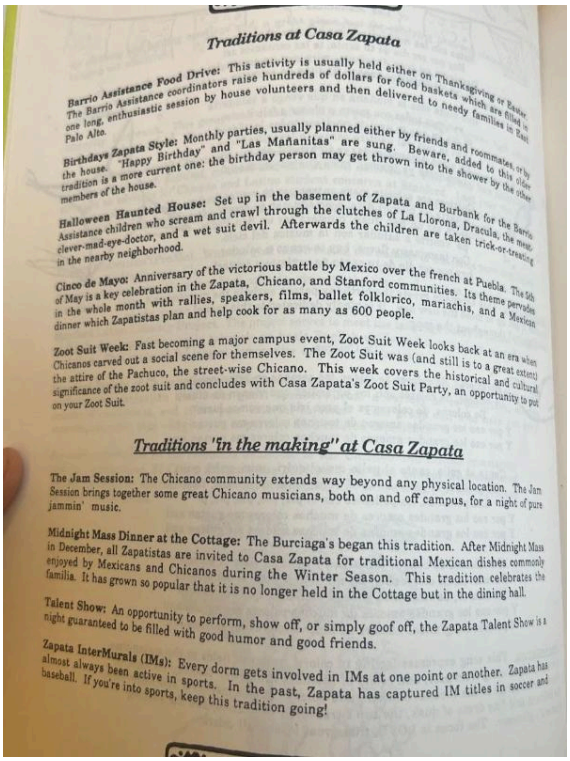
effectively. I also liked the pace of the presentation and the class length itself."

- "Presentations were always super engaging and I got to learn a lot throughout the quarter. I think the diversity of topics is always great and I really [e]njoy small group conversations with my peers."

This practice of collecting resident feedback is one that appeared often in the archives as well. An example from the mid-1990s shows an end-of-Fall-quarter survey conducted by the student staff as a way to assess residents' experiences so far and plan improvements for the upcoming quarter. The survey asked questions about whether residents considered Zapata to be their "home," if they were comfortable having friends visit the dorm, if their staff was approachable, and if they believed that Zapata creates a supportive and friendly community, among other things.

Dorm Traditions

The "Dorm Traditions" section of the 1990-91 *Zapatista* highlighted a variety of events that engaged not only residents of Zapata, but a border network beyond Stanford University. Examples include the Barrio Assistance Food Drive, a Halloween Haunted House, and Zoot Suit week.



Traditions at Casa Zapata

Barrio Assistance Food Drive: This activity is usually held either on Thanksgiving or Easter. The Barrio Assistance coordinators raise hundreds of dollars for food baskets which are filled in one long, enthusiastic session by house volunteers and then delivered to needy families in East Palo Alto.

Birthdays Zapata Style: Monthly parties, usually planned either by friends and roommates, or by the house. "Happy Birthday" and "Las Mañanitas" are sung. Beware, added to this older tradition is a more current one: the birthday person may get thrown into the shower by the other members of the house.

Halloween Haunted House: Set up in the basement of Zapata and Burbank for the Barrio Assistance children who scream and crawl through the clutches of La Llorona, Dracula, the mean-clever-mad-eye-doctor, and a wet suit devil. Afterwards the children are taken trick-or-treating in the nearby neighborhood.

Cinco de Mayo: Anniversary of the victorious battle by Mexico over the french at Puebla. The 5th of May is a key celebration in the Zapata, Chicano, and Stanford communities. Its theme pervades in the whole month with rallies, speakers, films, ballet folklorico, mariachis, and a Mexican dinner which Zapatistas plan and help cook for as many as 600 people.

Zoot Suit Week: Fast becoming a major campus event, Zoot Suit Week looks back at an era when Chicanos carved out a social scene for themselves. The Zoot Suit was (and still is to a great extent) the attire of the Pachuco, the street-wise Chicano. This week covers the historical and cultural significance of the zoot suit and concludes with Casa Zapata's Zoot Suit Party, an opportunity to put on your Zoot Suit.

Traditions "in the making" at Casa Zapata

The Jam Session: The Chicano community extends way beyond any physical location. The Jam Session brings together some great Chicano musicians, both on and off campus, for a night of pure jammin' music.

Midnight Mass Dinner at the Cottage: The Burciaga's began this tradition. After Midnight Mass in December, all Zapatistas are invited to Casa Zapata for traditional Mexican dishes commonly enjoyed by Mexicans and Chicanos during the Winter Season. This tradition celebrates the familia. It has grown so popular that it is no longer held in the Cottage but in the dining hall.

Talent Show: An opportunity to perform, show off, or simply goof off, the Zapata Talent Show is a night guaranteed to be filled with good humor and good friends.

Zapata InterMurals (IMs): Every dorm gets involved in IMs at one point or another. Zapata has almost always been active in sports. In the past, Zapata has captured IM titles in soccer and baseball. If you're into sports, keep this tradition going!

Image 64: Dorm Traditions in the 1990-91 *Zapatista*

The Haunted Halloween House, for instance, was an elaborate event set up in the shared basement of Casa Zapata and Burbank Hall, designed for "the Barrio Assistance children" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, 1990-91 *Zapatista* "Dorm Traditions", para. 3). The description of the event provided in

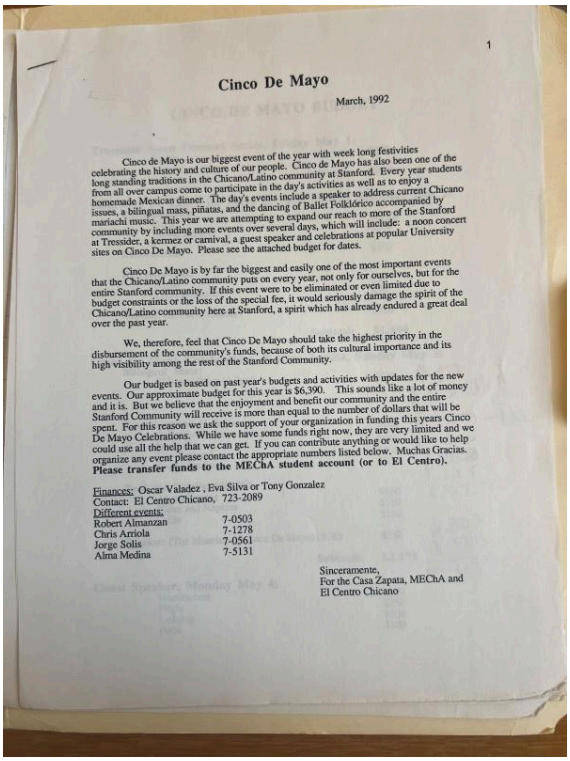
the *Zapatista* describes how, following the event, "the children are taken trick-or-treating in the nearby neighborhood" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, 1990-91 *Zapatista* "Dorm Traditions", para. 3).

Zoot Suit Week was described as "fast becoming a major campus event" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, 1990-91 *Zapatista* "Dorm Traditions", para. 5). The week featured discussions on the historical and cultural significance of the zoot suit, culminating in Casa Zapata's Zoot Suit Party, an opportunity for students to dress in their own zoot suits. Many of these old Zoot Suits were held in a storage room in the Zapata basement for years until a recent cleanout.

Other traditions 'in the making' during that era included "Jam Sessions," which brought musicians from on and off campus for an evening of music, and "Midnight Mass Dinner at the Cottage." This event, started by the Burciagas, invited all residents to enjoy traditional Mexican dishes commonly eaten during the winter season. The tradition became so popular that it eventually moved from the Cottage to the dining hall to accommodate the growing crowd (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, 1990-91 *Zapatista* "Dorm Traditions", para. 7).

Though many of these traditions have come and gone, new ones continue to develop in the space. One new tradition, starting in 2023, is "Tacos Tumbados". This quarterly event, held in the RF Cottage, brings in a local taquera, features a performance of corridos by a student group, and a student DJ who helps maintain the energy of the space before and after the performance. The event is open to all house residents and friends of the house; it's a space for everyone to simply hang out and get to know each other and the RF family just a little bit better each time. The turnout is so high that there often aren't enough seats to accommodate everyone.

Cinco de Mayo



Cinco De Mayo

March, 1992

Cinco de Mayo is our biggest event of the year with week long festivities celebrating the history and culture of our people. Cinco de Mayo has also been one of the long standing traditions in the Chicano/Latino community at Stanford. Every year students from all over campus come to participate in the day's activities as well as to enjoy a homemade Mexican dinner. The day's events include a speaker to address current Chicano issues, a bilingual mass, piñatas, and the dancing of Ballet Folklórico accompanied by mariachi music. This year we are attempting to expand our reach to more of the Stanford community by including more events over several days, which will include: a noon concert at Tressider, a kermez or carnival, a guest speaker and celebrations at popular University sites on Cinco De Mayo. Please see the attached budget for dates.

Cinco De Mayo is by far the biggest and easily one of the most important events that the Chicano/Latino community puts on every year, not only for ourselves, but for the entire Stanford community. If this event were to be eliminated or even limited due to budget constraints or the loss of the special fee, it would seriously damage the spirit of the Chicano/Latino community here at Stanford, a spirit which has already endured a great deal over the past year.

We, therefore, feel that Cinco De Mayo should take the highest priority in the disbursement of the community's funds, because of both its cultural importance and its high visibility among the rest of the Stanford Community.

Our budget is based on past year's budgets and activities with updates for the new events. Our approximate budget for this year is $6,390. This sounds like a lot of money and it is. But we believe that the enjoyment and benefit our community and the entire Stanford Community will receive is more than equal to the number of dollars that will be spent. For this reason we ask the support of your organization in funding this years Cinco De Mayo Celebrations. While we have some funds right now, they are very limited and we could use all the help that we can get. If you can contribute anything or would like to help organize any event please contact the appropriate numbers listed below. Muchas Gracias.
Please transfer funds to the MEChA student account (or to El Centro).

Finances: Oscar Valadez , Eva Silva or Tony Gonzalez
Contact: El Centro Chicano, 723-2089
Different events:
Robert Almanzan 7-0503
Chris Arriola 7-1278
Jorge Solis 7-0561
Alma Medina 7-5131

Sinceramente,
For the Casa Zapata, MEChA and
El Centro Chicano

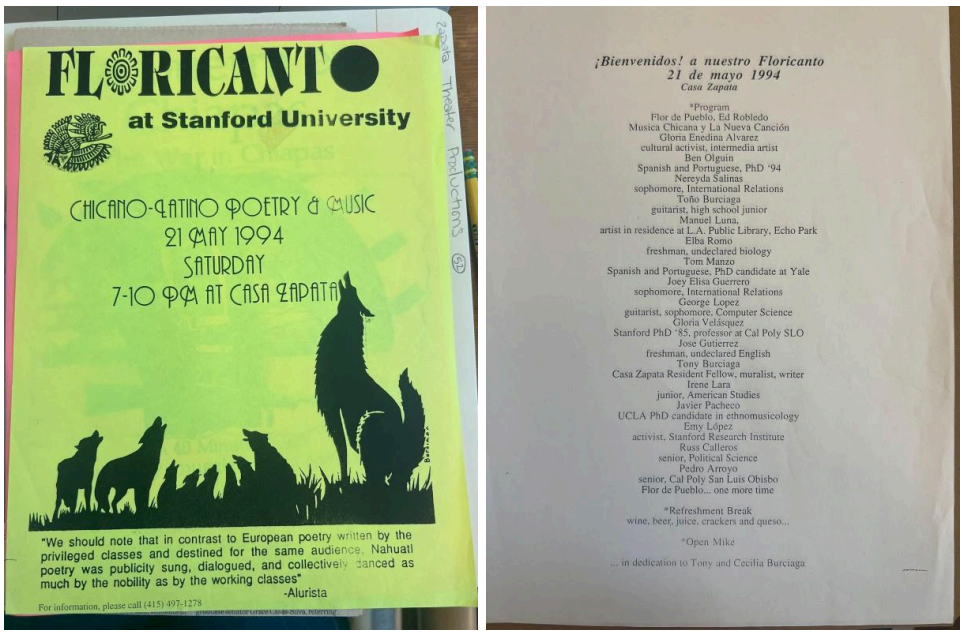
Image 65: Cinco de Mayo letter

In March 1922, a letter was sent out, seemingly to various campus organizations, calling for them to prioritize allocating community funds towards Cinco de Mayo week at Casa Zapata, which had an approximate budget of $6,390 that year. The letter described the celebrations as a gathering where "students from all over campus come to participate in the day's activities" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, Cinco de Mayo letter, para. 1). The planned festivities included, "a speaker to address current Chicano issues, a bilingual mass, piñatas, and the dancing of Ballet Folklórico accompanied by mariachi music" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, Cinco de Mayo letter, para. 1). The 1992 celebration aimed to expand the celebration to include "a noon concert at Tressider, a kermez or carnival, a guest speaker and celebrations at popular University sites on Cinco de Mayo" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, Cinco de Mayo letter, para. 1). According to other documents in the archives, many of the larger scale events put on by the dorm, including the Cinco de Mayo celebrations, were funded in collaboration with various student organizations.

Cinco de Mayo is no longer a central focus of this type of programming at Casa Zapata. Instead, other student groups, notably Stanford Indigenous Students of the AmericaS (SISAS), have taken the lead in reshaping common narratives and misconceptions around the day. SISAS, formed in 2023, organized one of their earliest events, "El Cinco de Mayo: Battle of Puebla Teach-In" around uplifting the real history of Cinco de Mayo. That day marks a largely Indigenous-led victory in Puebla, Mexico against an attempted French invasion. SISAS created the event as a way to discuss how Cinco de Mayo has

become “a holiday to co-opt ‘Mexican’ culture, and has erased the experience of Indigenous Poblanos who fought in the Battle of Puebla” (@sisas.stanford 2023).

Flor y Canto


FLORICANTO
at Stanford University
CHICANO-LATINO POETRY & MUSIC
21 MAY 1994
SATURDAY
7-10 PM AT CASA ZAPATA
"We should note that in contrast to European poetry written by the privileged classes and destined for the same audience, Nahuatl poetry was publicity sung, dialogued, and collectively danced as much by the nobility as by the working classes"
-Alurista
For information, please call (415) 497-1278
¡Bienvenidos! a nuestro Floricanto
21 de mayo 1994
Casa Zapata
*Program
Flor de Pueblo, Ed Robledo
Musica Chicana y La Nueva Canción
Gloria Enedina Alvarez
cultural activist, intermedia artist
Ben Olguin
Spanish and Portuguese, PhD '94
Nereyda Salinas
sophomore, International Relations
Toño Burciaga
guitarist, high school junior
Manuel Luna,
artist in residence at L.A. Public Library, Echo Park
Elba Romo
freshman, undeclared biology
Tom Manzo
Spanish and Portuguese, PhD candidate at Yale
Joey Elisa Guerrero
sophomore, International Relations
George Lopez
guitarist, sophomore, Computer Science
Gloria Velásquez
Stanford PhD '85, professor at Cal Poly SLO
Jose Gutierrez
freshman, undeclared English
Tony Burciaga
Casa Zapata Resident Fellow, muralist, writer
Irene Lara
junior, American Studies
Javier Pacheco
UCLA PhD candidate in ethnomusicology
Emy López
activist, Stanford Research Institute
Russ Calleros
senior, Political Science
Pedro Arroyo
senior, Cal Poly San Luis Obisbo
Flor de Pueblo... one more time
*Refreshment Break
wine, beer, juice, crackers and queso...
*Open Mike
... in dedication to Tony and Cecilia Burciaga

Images 66 and 67: Flor y Canto flyer (left) and program (right)

Flor y Canto has become the “big ticket” event for Casa Zapata, evolving over decades into its current form. While it has been a tradition since at least the 1990s, it appears to have started as more of a poetry and music showcase rather than the general community talent show it is today. The program from May 21, 1994, lists a mix of performers that included not only dorm residents but also a cultural activist and artist, an artist-in-residence at the Los Angeles Public Library, a PhD candidate at Yale, a professor at California Polytechnic State University, a PhD candidate in ethnomusicology from UCLA, and a senior at Cal Poly. The evening ended with an open mic, which “lasted til 3 or 4 AM” (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, “Residence Program Summary” 1993-94) and welcomed a crowd of 50-60 attendees. Flor y Canto was marked as a standout event in program summaries found in the archives.

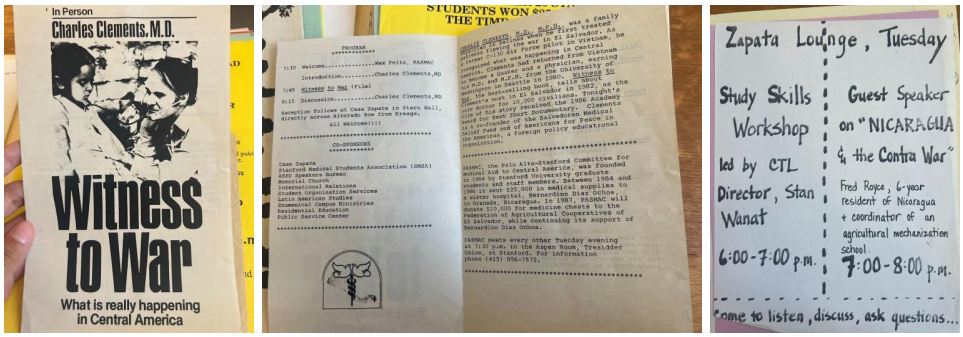
Flor y Canto is now held in February during Stanford's Family Weekend. Traditionally hosted in Stern Dining, last year's Flor y Canto was moved to Toyon Hall to accommodate a larger audience, as Stern Dining had become overcrowded by the event in previous years. The move allowed the event to expand, allowing to student's to showcase other talents (drawings, paintings, poetry, etc) in addition to the performances. The event saw a full house, the Toyon lounge overflowing with students and their families.

Image 68: Flor y Canto images from the archives (dates unknown)

Events from the Archives

One of the most interesting parts of exploring the archives of old Casa Zapata records was uncovering a vast collection of past dorm events and tracing their cultural and political roots.

In the 1980s and 1990s, several events took place in the dorm that focused on Central America, though specifically the civil wars in the region. One such event put on by the Palo Alto-Stanford Committee for Medical Aid to Central America brought in Charles Clements, a physician from Salinas who wrote a book on his work as a doctor in El Salvador in 1982. It remains unclear whether Central American students at Casa Zapata or the broader Stanford student body were involved in the planning for this event.

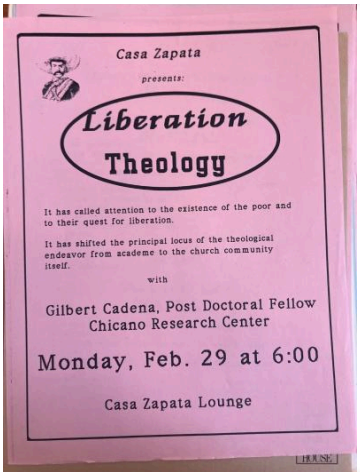

In Person
Charles Clements, M.D.
Witness to War
What is really happening in Central America
Zapata Lounge, Tuesday
Study Skills Workshop
led by CTL Director, Stan Wanat
6:00-7:00 p.m.
Guest Speaker on "NICARAGUA & the Contra War"
Fred Royce, 6-year resident of Nicaragua + coordinator of an agricultural mechanization school.
7:00-8:00 p.m.
Come to listen, discuss, ask questions...

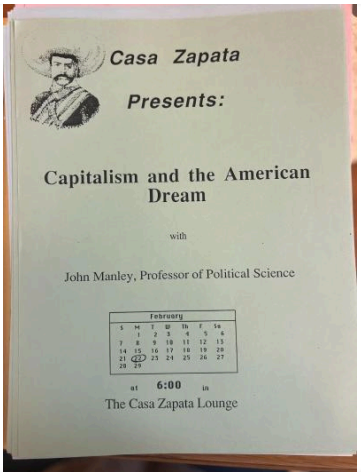
Images 69-71: Events from the archives related to Central America

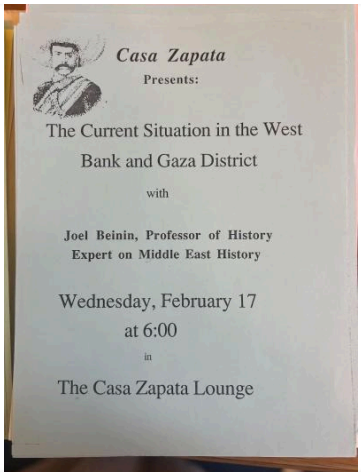
Another event centered on the Contra War in Nicaragua and featured Fred Royce, an American who had lived in Central America (L.A. Times Archives 1986), as a guest speaker. While these events were likely informative, it raises questions about the value of focusing on the stories of visitors to the region rather than Central Americans themselves. This absence underscores the importance of centering Central American voices in conversations about their regions, a priority that has become more prominent in Casa Zapata's programming today

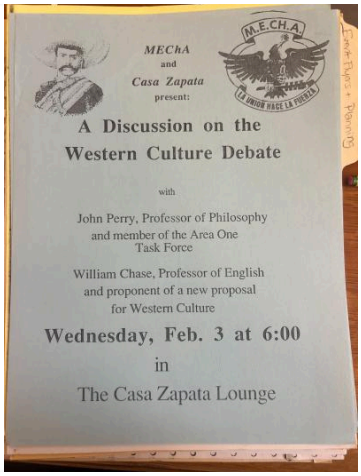
Perhaps a more empowering event related to Central America during this period was found in a program summaries spreadsheet for the 1993-94 academic year — "Guatemalan

Women Organizing," which took place on October 19, 1994. Again, it's not clear whether this event was put on by Central American students, but at the very least, it appeared to present a discussion on the region that centered on the voices and experiences of people who are actually from there and actively organizing in their own homes. The event received high praise in the program summary, with a comment describing it as a "* Wonderful program in terms of issues of gender esp. 'third world' women and organizing in Latin America" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, "Residence Program Summary" 1993-94). This event was marked with an asterisk, indicating it was either one of the "most successful ('best') programs" or "good for raising issues of pluralism or for presenting multicultural perspectives" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, "Residence Program Summary" 1993-94).


Casa Zapata
presents:
Liberation
Theology
It has called attention to the existence of the poor and to their quest for liberation.
It has shifted the principal locus of the theological endeavor from academe to the church community itself.
with
Gilbert Cadena, Post Doctoral Fellow
Chicano Research Center
Monday, Feb. 29 at 6:00
Casa Zapata Lounge



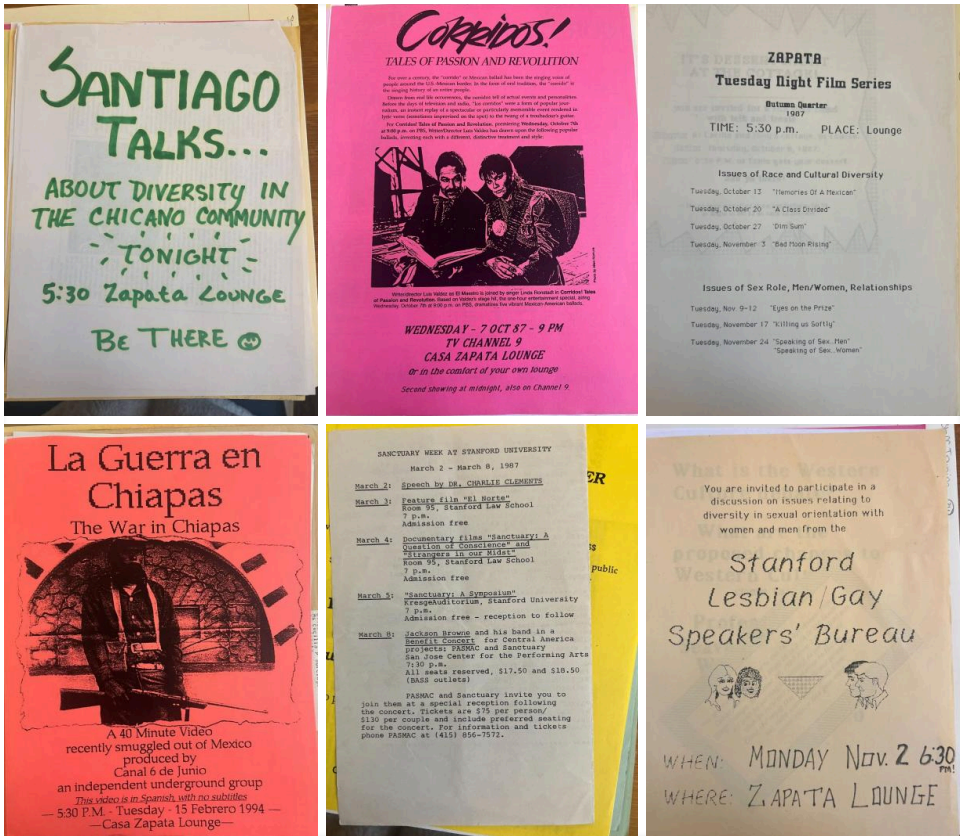



MEChA
and
Casa Zapata
present:
M.E.CH.A
A Discussion on the Western Culture Debate
with
John Perry, Professor of Philosophy and member of the Area One Task Force
William Chase, Professor of English and proponent of a new proposal for Western Culture
Wednesday, Feb. 3 at 6:00
in
The Casa Zapata Lounge

Images 72-75: "Casa Zapata Presents..." flyers

Many of the event flyers I came across shared a similar appearance and introductory phrase: "Casa Zapata Presents." This phrase seemed to indicate what was potentially a brief series of related events, or a specific way of presenting events in the dorm. All of the events in this series were political in nature, including conversations about Palestine, capitalism, the American Dream, and related topics.

Overall, in my brief search through the archives, the majority of event flyers that I found were of events that were not only political but centered conversations surrounding efforts of resistance and liberation. These included different watch parties, from Tuesday Night Film Series that explored issues of race, cultural diversity, relationships, and sex and gender expectations across multiple weeks, to the screening of an hour-long television special on corridos. Many of the events touched on topics of current issues or happenings in Latin America ("La Guerra en Chiapas," February 15, 1994), as well as conversations on sex, gender, and sexual orientation (discussion by the Stanford Lesbian/Gay Speakers' Bureau, November 2, year unknown) and some conversations that extended over multiple days, such as the programming for "Sanctuary Week" (March 2-8, 1987) which culminated in a "Benefit Concert for Central America projects" (Casa Zapata, Records, SC1461, Sanctuary Week at Stanford flyer 1987).


SANTIAGO TALKS...
ABOUT DIVERSITY IN THE CHICANO COMMUNITY
- TONIGHT -
5:30 Zapata Lounge
BE THERE
Corridos!
TALES OF PASSION AND REVOLUTION
WEDNESDAY - 7 OCT 87 - 9 PM
TV CHANNEL 9
CASA ZAPATA LOUNGE
or in the comfort of your own lounge
Second showing at midnight, also on Channel 9.
ZAPATA
Tuesday Night Film Series
Autumn Quarter
1987
TIME: 5:30 p.m. PLACE: Lounge
Issues of Race and Cultural Diversity
Tuesday, October 13 "Memories Of A Mexican"
Tuesday, October 20 "A Class Divided"
Tuesday, October 27 "Dim Sum"
Tuesday, November 3 "Bad Moon Rising"
Issues of Sex Role, Men/Women, Relationships
Tuesday, Nov. 9-12 "Eyes on the Prize"
Tuesday, November 17 "Killing us Softly"
Tuesday, November 24 "Speaking of Sex, Men"
"Speaking of Sex, Women"
La Guerra en Chiapas
The War in Chiapas
A 40 Minute Video
recently smuggled out of Mexico
produced by
Canal 6 de Junio
an independent underground group
This video is in Spanish, with no subtitles
— 5:30 P.M. - Tuesday - 15 Febrero 1994 —
—Casa Zapata Lounge—
SANCTUARY WEEK AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY
March 2 - March 8, 1987
March 2: Speech by DR. CHARLIE CLEMENTS
March 3: Feature film "El Norte" Room 95, Stanford Law School 7 p.m. Admission free
March 4: Documentary films "Sanctuary: A Question of Conscience" and "Strangers in our Midst" Room 95, Stanford Law School 7 p.m. Admission free
March 5: "Sanctuary: A Symposium" Kresgeauditorium, Stanford University 7 p.m. Admission free - reception to follow
March 8: Jackson Browne and his band in a Benefit Concert for Central America projects: PASMAC and Sanctuary San Jose Center for the Performing Arts 7:30 p.m. All seats reserved, $17.50 and $18.50 (BASS outlets)
PASMAC and Sanctuary invite you to join them at a special reception following the concert. Tickets are $75 per person/ $130 per couple and include preferred seating for the concert. For information and tickets phone PASMAC at (415) 856-7572.
You are invited to participate in a discussion on issues relating to diversity in sexual orientation with women and men from the
Stanford
Lesbian/Gay
Speakers' Bureau
WHEN: MONDAY Nov. 2 6:30 PM
WHERE: ZAPATA LOUNGE

Images 76-81: Other event flyers from the archives

Events Today

One event from Fall 2024 that I would like to highlight is the Cross-Ethnic-Theme-Dorm (ETD) social held in early October. This event was planned during the single day of Student Leader training this past summer that was allocated for ETAs and marked the beginning of a collaborative effort among the fourth ethnic-theme dorms. The training session began with introductions, where we got to know one another and shared our visions for our respective dorm communities in the upcoming academic year. We also shared questions that we had for one another about the role, learning from returning ETAs about their experiences and any suggestions they had for new ETAs.

The most helpful part of this day occurred when one ETA asked if we could spend the rest of the training collaborating together, suggesting we spend the remainder of the training collaborating rather than continuing with the predetermined University activity that we felt wasn't the best use of our time. With unanimous support from the other ETAs in the room, we were able to secure the rest of the session for our own discussion and planning.

We were all on a very similar page from the beginning, all aligned in wanting to foster more collaboration across the ethnic theme dorms. This shared vision led to the planning of a cross-ETD social to kick off the academic year. The event aimed to introduce residents to the ETAs of all four dorms while providing a space to mingle and connect with students from other ETDs.

The Cross-ETD Social also served as the first Zaplatica of the quarter. Although Zaplaticas are typically held every Monday in the Zapata Lounge, we decided on a more central and spacious location to accommodate residents from all the dorms: the

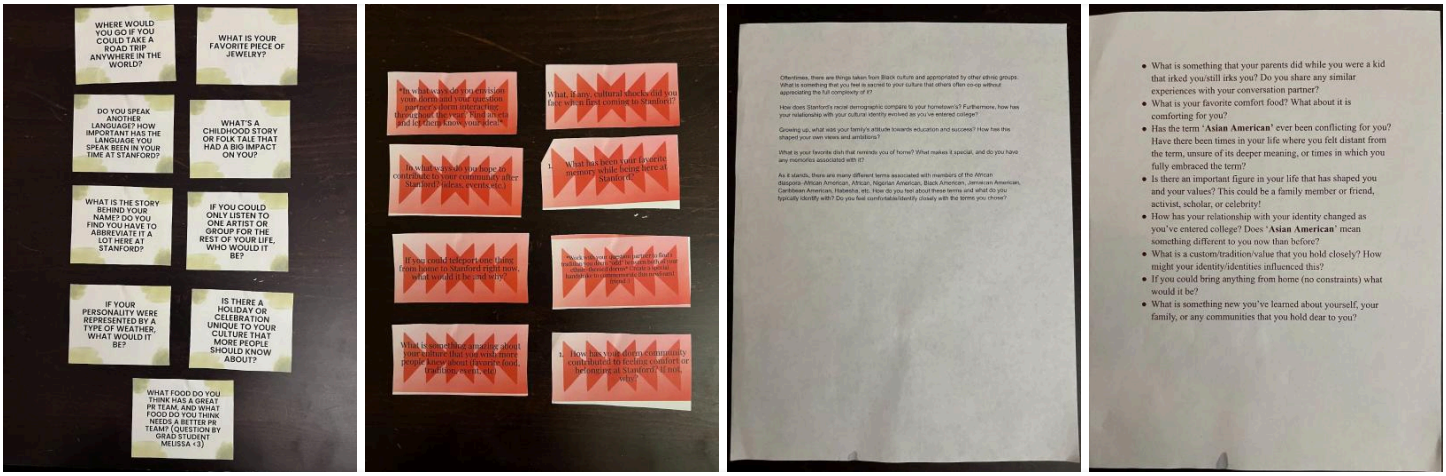
Henry and Monique Brandon Family Community Room at the Black Community Services Center (BCSC).

Image 82: Cross-ETD Social, Fall 2024

The event was structured around creating an inviting space for new connections. As attendees arrived at the BCSC, they were greeted with snacks, including paletas, Yakult, and chips. The event began with introductions of all the ETAs, followed by brief presentations from each house on their dorm's history and the connections between the ethnic-theme dorms. The rest of the time was dedicated to residents mingling and getting to know one another. To encourage cross-dorm conversations, each house prepared and printed optional question prompts as a resource for attendees.

Some examples of the questions:

- Red text: **Okada**
- Black text: **Ujamaa**
- Green and white background: **Zapata**
- Red patterned background: **Muwekma**


WHERE WOULD YOU GO IF YOU COULD TAKE A ROAD TRIP ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD?
WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PIECE OF JEWELRY?
DO YOU SPEAK ANOTHER LANGUAGE? HOW IMPORTANT HAS THE LANGUAGE YOU SPEAK BEEN IN YOUR TIME AT STANFORD?
WHAT'S A CHILDHOOD STORY OR FOLK TALE THAT HAD A BIG IMPACT ON YOU?
WHAT IS THE STORY BEHIND YOUR NAME? DO YOU FIND YOU HAVE TO ABBREVIATE IT A LOT HERE AT STANFORD?
IF YOU COULD ONLY LISTEN TO ONE ARTIST OR GROUP FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, WHO WOULD IT BE?
IF YOUR PERSONALITY WERE REPRESENTED BY A TYPE OF WEATHER, WHAT WOULD IT BE?
IS THERE A HOLIDAY OR CELEBRATION UNIQUE TO YOUR CULTURE THAT MORE PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?
WHAT FOOD DO YOU THINK HAS A GREAT PR TEAM, AND WHAT FOOD DO YOU THINK NEEDS A BETTER PR TEAM? (QUESTION BY GRAD STUDENT MELISSA <3)
What, if any, cultural shocks did you face when first coming to Stanford?
What has been your favorite memory while being here at Stanford?
If you could teleport one thing from home to Stanford right now, what would it be and why?
What is something specific about your culture that you wish more people knew about (food, traditions, events, etc)
How has your dorm community contributed to feeling comfort or belonging at Stanford, if not, why?
Oftentimes, there are things taken from Black culture and appropriated by other ethnic groups. What is something that you feel is secret to your culture that others often co-op without appreciating the full complexity of it?
How does Stanford's racial demographic compare to your hometown's? Furthermore, how has your relationship with your cultural identity evolved as you've entered college?
Growing up, what was your family's attitude towards education and success? How has this shaped your own views and ambitions?
What is your favorite dish that reminds you of home? What makes it special, and do you have any memories associated with it?
As it stands, there are many different terms associated with members of the African diaspora: African American, African, Nigerian American, Black American, Jamaican American, Caribbean American, Habesha, etc. How do you feel about these terms and what do you typically identify with? Do you feel comfortable/identify closely with the terms you chose?
What is something that your parents did while you were a kid that irked you/still irks you? Do you share any similar experiences with your conversation partner?
What is your favorite comfort food? What about it is comforting for you?
Has the term 'Asian American' ever been conflicting for you? Have there been times in your life where you felt distant from the term, unsure of its deeper meaning, or times in which you fully embraced the term?
Is there an important figure in your life that has shaped you and your values? This could be a family member or friend, activist, scholar, or celebrity!
How has your relationship with your identity changed as you've entered college? Does 'Asian American' mean something different to you now than before?
What is a custom/tradition/value that you hold closely? How might your identity/identities influenced this?
If you could bring anything from home (no constraints) what would it be?
What is something new you've learned about yourself, your family, or any communities that you hold dear to you?

Images 83-86: Cross-ETD Social questions

However, student leaders are not the only ones who help construct the space and community at Zapata — residents and Fourth Floorers play a huge role in shaping Zapata into what it is today.

One example of this involvement is through resident-led On-Call collaborations with their RAs. “On-Call” refers to alcohol-free programming held every Friday and Saturday from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. in the Zapata Lounge. The RA on-call plans the programming and provides snacks, creating an opportunity for students to engage in substance-free social activities over the weekend while connecting more with their residential staff. Occasionally, residents bring their own ideas for alcohol-free events to student staff in order to collaborate and bring their vision to life. These collaborations have resulted in a variety of unique On Call events that speak to the interests of residents and allow them to take on a more active role in event planning for the dorm.

Even beyond On-Calls, residents continue to find ways to contribute to the dorm's community in meaningful ways. "Resident of the Week" is a tradition celebrated during house meetings, where one student is highlighted weekly for their active and caring participation in the community. This fall quarter (2024), a Fourth Floor—a student who doesn't technically live in the building but is deeply involved in its activities—was recognized as a Resident of the Week. To me, this highlights how those that impact the dorm aren't just the staff or people who live in the building, but those that choose to make Zapata their home and actively contribute to its community.

CONCLUSION

Casa Zapata's establishment and evolution underscore the inherent political roots of ethnic-theme housing at Stanford. The dorm's history and evolution over time highlights the continuous struggle to maintain spaces that authentically reflect and support the diverse identities and experiences of their residents. However, the University's push to remain "apolitical" complicates the ability of ethnic-theme dorms like Casa Zapata to fulfill their missions fully. This institutional stance often restricts the work that students and staff can undertake. For student leaders, this tension between institutional expectations and community needs demands constant navigation, requiring innovative approaches to ensure that these spaces remain sources of activism, empowerment, and cultural preservation.

A critical look at collective archive building at Casa Zapata invites us to ask: how do we build collective spaces that reject the university and its violence? I believe this is an ever-building project at Zapata, not one that has necessarily been achieved yet but one that students, especially those who hold

marginalized identities within “Latinidad” continue to work toward. There is still so much more that can—and should—be added to this archive.

As a Caribbean individual who has felt isolated by the dorm’s Mexican-American aesthetics and focus, I hope to see perspectives like mine more prominently represented in this archive, as well as the voices of AfroLatinx, Indigenous, Central American, South American, queer, trans, and all other students who have struggled to carve out their place within Casa Zapata. Their stories and experiences are vital to painting a fuller, more inclusive, and accurate picture of the dorm’s history and its evolving community.

CONTACT

Until this archive can be moved to a more permanent platform, please feel free to reach out with any thoughts, comments, or suggestions for additions at **svelazq@stanford.edu.**

WORKS CITED

☆ All the documents, archives, interviews, and other materials referenced in the writing of this archive are cited below. Specific image citations can be found in the "Credits" section at the bottom of this webpage ☆

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IMAGE CREDITS

The majority of the images included in this archive were found in the Casa Zapata Records (SC1461) in the Department of Special Collections at Stanford University. The others were found either through social media, online archives, or taken by Saimary Velázquez Carrasquillo.

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Images 1, 2, 4-5, 6-7, 8-13, 14-16, 17-19, 20-22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 31, 32, 40-43, 44-48, 49, 50-53, 54, 64, 65, 66-67, 68, 69-71, 72-75, 76-81	Stanford University, Casa Zapata, Records (SC1461). Dept. of Special Collections and University Archives, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, Calif.

Image 3	Cornell University Library. “National Student Strike May 6, 1970.” Persuasive Maps: PJ Mode Collection. Accessed November 24, 2024. https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/ss:19343688.
Images 24, 26, 29, 30, 33, 34-38, 39, 58-63, 83-86	Photos taken by Saimary (2024)
Images 55-56	@zapamigos. “‘In Tradition to Last Year, the 24-25 Zapata ETAs Are Humbled to Bring an Updated Iteration of Our Cultural Programming and Dorm Mission Statement. As a Living Document, This Outline Provides an in-Depth Look at Our Commitments as a Dorm and the Intentionality behind Our Weekly Programming. ¡Que Vivan Los Estudiantes! Kite Etidyan Yo Viv! Deixe Os Alunos Viverem!’” Instagram, September 19, 2024. https://www.instagram.com/p/DAHTRd7SCvN/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link.
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Image 82

@ujamaahouse, @zapamigos, @okadahouse, and @muwekmatahruk. "'Greetings everyone! Join @zapamigos, @ujamaahouse, @okadahouse, and @muwekmatahruk This Thursday, October 3 from 6-7 Pm at the @theblackhousesu for Our Cross Ethnic Theme Dorm Rainbow Coaltion Mixer!✨ Come Socialize with Other ETD Residents and Learn How We Can Build Solidarity for the Year! ❤️ .'" Instagram, September 30, 2024. https://www.instagram.com/p/DAjX76LSGGl/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRlODBiNWFlZA.